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ERRATA.

- Page 80. Fifth line from top insert word "all" before "adversity."
- Page 115. In ninth line change the word "aught" to "naught."
- Page 126. In fifteenth line change the word "would" to "should."
- Page 167. Last word in the twelfth line should be "threne."
- Page 189. In the thirteenth line insert the word "light" before "divine."
- Page 232. In last line after the word "moulds" insert "us."
- Page 242. The last word of the sixteenth line should be "spijt."

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POEMS AND SONNETS



POEMS AND SONNETS

BY
HERBERT PRICE



E. W. WELCH
QUEENSTOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

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POEMS



POMONA

"A wild desolate stretch of burning sand."—*The State*,
May, 1910.

DOWN in the west beneath the dauntless azure,
And open glare of heat that never falters,
Where all day long across the lurid heavens,
Wheels the red circle of th'unfuelled splendour
That from undated years hath scorched the desert,
And made the iron crested ridges quiver,
Even as a tigress when her mate approaches,
Quivers before his sudden flame of onset ;
There sweep wide downs that yield no blade of
pasture,

Smooth undulations close the dim horizon,
And in the stifled cauldrons of the valleys
Stand the bare branches of ungainly bushes
That slant across the sun like sheaves of arrows,
Or querulous quills in quick defence uplifted.
There long low rocks above the rounded billows,
And wind-ribbed dunes that swell and roll together,
Stretch like dead serpents in the fervid silence,
And giant boulders burnished by the ages
Loom like black bosses on a shield of copper,
And weathered stones, outflung in tumbled masses,
Litter the slopes and shoulders of the ranges,
Haggard as death's unburied heaps of battle.
There lie deep hollows where no drop of water

Mirrors the steel blue dome of torrid anger,
 That in midnoon is like the cope of Hades
 When all the angels of revolt are gathered
 In marshalled ranks about their blazing banner.
 O'er those brown leagues not even a lonely shadow,
 Cast by the wing of some sky-ranging eagle,
 Skims down the wind towards the glimmering ocean,
 Life's adumbration for a fleeting moment,
 Seen on the dewless desert's barren bosom.
 No mists creep up to rest in all those valleys,
 Like great white birds that sleep in secret places,
 And with the dawn trail o'er the seaward mountains,
 Unto the morning music of the waters.
 No vapours cling about those ebon boulders ;
 No rains descend upon those arid reaches ;
 And there no bee enjoys the glad delirium
 That thrills her when she slips into the poppy,
 And rolls and riots in a reckless rapture.
 No swarm of locusts like a drifted shower,
 Goes drizzling down into the sultry sunset,
 And on those stones no glossy lizards glitter.
 No sigh of life is heard ; no cry of anguish
 Wails through the heat from throats athirst, and
 choking
 In the thick gasps of dusty dissolution.
 No matin song awakes the happy echoes
 Through all those tawny miles of ruined desert ;
 Not even the fabled salamander basketh

On those hot mirrors of the shining basalt.
And when the evening closes like a furnace
Shut down in hell upon a crush of demons,
The very rocks rejoice to be delivered,
And to the sandy waste a like appeasement
Comes with the advent of the gracious twilight.
There on a day that no man now remembers,
Urged on by prescient pulses of disaster,
And ringed about with fire of towering whirlwinds,
And smothered in a shimmering sea of ether,
White hot, enswathing all the naked landscape,
Came one who tottered on bare feet, ensanguined
By fevered marches through a blistered country.
And ever round him as he moved, a swelter
As of the winds that blow o'er flowing lava,
Stifled his breath, and throbbed against his temples,
And in his eyes was like the scalding vapours
That hiss against a world of molten metals,
Yet wounding with a keener prick of anguish,
For all his scars relentless winds corroded,
And broke across with dry decrepitation
That knew no ease or soothing touch of moisture.
Never in all vicissitudes of horror
Hath man been so abandoned to the furies.
Out of all ways and chances of assistance
He moved, with fate in urgent haste to speed him,
And still before him rose delirious visions,
That called and vanished, and returned to beckon,

Leading him on through the insatiate desert
Unto a death remorselessly appointed,
Where no good angel in a guiding glory
May lead him upward into calmer regions ;
So that his spirit o'er the windy wastelands,
Wailing for ever in a hopeless circle,
And seeking still some sure surcease of torture,
Returneth back to where his perished body
Dries in the sun, like any beast of burden
Abandoned on the march and so forgotten.
What crime was his that drove him out of comfort
Into the grip of nature starved to anger ?
What high resolves were his the fates defeated ?
What love rejected sent him forth to wander
Out of the course and passage of his fellows ?
What hopes were swept into a grey oblivion ?
What young desires were by the frosts of wisdom
Nipt in their sheaths and coldly left to perish ?
What magic stories lured him to adventure
Forth on a path heroic souls have followed,
And often made a wider track for knowledge
Than felt the feet of perished generations ?
What madness drove him with unbated fury
Into these desperate regions of inferno ?
No answer comes, or loud, or softly whispered,
Out of the winds on which his viewless spirit
Moves to and fro, in tireless search of exit
From the sad circle of his lonely prison.

Only we know that there upon the desert
Sun-shrivelled nomads found him dead, and lying
Dry as a mummy in the sands that sifted
Into his eyes and through the latticed spaces
Made by his ribs and shrunken shreds of muscle.
And there they scooped a hollow in the valley
To hide his corpse from the unblinking heavens,
And as they moved him, lo ! from palm and pocket
Into the sand fell gems of peerless lustre,
Torrents of light that made a tinkling music,
And flashed and glittered from their changing facets,
Streamed here and there from out his tattered
garments.

Diamonds enough between his fleshless fingers
To reach the cost and purchase of a kingdom,
Slid out and scattered in a blaze of wonder ;
And all about the starry fire of jewels
Ran down the sand and gathered into hollows
Shining like flecks of moonlight in a forest.
Great gems that lay for ages in the desert
And drew away the eyes of crouching lions
To leave their prey and gaze upon the splendour
Shot through the darkness of a dateless midnight,
Flashed and were hidden in the dust beneath him.
But those who buried bones and rags together,
Left all these gems to drift about the valley,
And reared a grave in simple human service
Over his corse that so was doomed to perish.

PIONEERS

ON ways fulfilled of glory
They march with singing feet,
And though the light be hoary,
And though no flower be sweet,
Though clouds on darkness follow,
And over hill and hollow
Flies not one summer swallow,
They turn not to retreat.

But those who droop and perish
Because their fear is great,
Who only strive to cherish
Their own especial state,
Lament when yields are rated
For gains by loss abated,
For avid dreams unsated,
And rains that came too late.

For these the earth is rotten,
A vale of dole and pain,
Where creatures misbegotten
Beget themselves again ;
Their skies are grey with ashes,
And sleet that stings and lashes,
And the only gleam that flashes
Glints off a golden chain.

But those gone out and seaward
Fear no assaults of fate ;
They drift ahead or leeward
With hearts and souls elate ;
They see the vision splendid,
Fierce suns by suns attended,
Strong light with stronger blended,
And all things free and great.

Dark days and nights as beamless
Gloom o'er them, drenched with rain ;
And some are dead and dreamless,
But none is thrall to pain ;
Still each with each rejoices,
And their unbroken voices
Sing down the tuneless noises
That mark the world's disdain.

Though all their hopes and visions
Like famished flames be dead,
Though all the world's derisions
Clang round each lifted head,
They pause not yet to wonder
At such discordant thunder,
For far and faint out yonder
The guiding Gleam is sped.

Not now, and not hereafter
Will these be born to earth ;
Their suns go down to laughter,
Their dawns awake to mirth ;
For them the cloud is lifted,
The mist drawn up, and drifted
To where, by cool winds rifted,
The light wins through to birth.

Though crushed they will not falter,
Though ravaged none will fail,
Though checked by curb and halter
Such checks will not avail ;
In search of Eldorado,
Where lies no sleepy shadow,
They march o'er hill and meadow
Along the haunted trail.

They fear no raging blizzards,
Nor any storms that shriek,
Where weird and white as wizards
O'er frozen tarn and creek
Loom lonely hills that never
Heard song of bird or river,
And round whose sides for ever
The winds are loud and bleak.

They go from man degraded
By laws and creeds that cramp,
To where by light invaded
From some uplifted lamp,
They see the vast expanses,
Where day o'er night advances,
And all the changing chances
That reach the vanward camp.

They leave the noisome city
For open fields and skies,
Where sorrow needs no pity,
And anguish never cries ;
They call the weeping mothers,
And men their weary brothers,
To where no dead creed smothers
The soul's integrities.

They go where fetid breezes
Blow out the lees of pain ;
They scorn the rest that eases
The overwearied brain ;
And where no gold requites them,
Nor trumpet call incites them,
They for a world that slights them
Reap fields of deadly grain.

Their bones upon the byway
Mark stages where they fell,
While we along the highway
Marched singing down to hell.
Hot sands and dread morasses,
Dim woods too dim for grasses,
Through these the legion passes,
Led by the seeking spell.

We owe them, we the weaker,
Who dared not face the odds,
The faith that aids the seeker,
Not scourge of scorn or rods ;
To us in twilight hidden,
They call from heights forbidden,
Where only they have ridden,
And surely they are gods.

FERDINAND TO HÉLÈNE

(See " Tragic Comedians ")

WHAT thought assails my mind,
That is as sweet as dewy roses are,
When the dawn comes to dim the morning star,
That is as secret as the gentle wind,
Breathing about the flower-beds to find
And waft their souls afar ?

What thought comes like a dream
Under the lids of innocence asleep,
And stirs the sluggish veins until they leap
And frolic like each little mountain stream,
That runs to levels where the grasses gleam
Bright round the peaceful sheep ?

What thought is like the spring
That warmly brooding underneath the mould
Releases all the frozen saps from cold,
And moves them till they clothe each barren thing
With vesture of the season's burgeoning,
Purple, and pink, and gold ?

What thought assails my soul
With terror, and with sorrow, and with joy,
With longing and reluctance to employ

Means to attain the still receding goal,
With passion that o'ermasters all control,
And hopes the fates destroy ?

Ah ! heaven ! the thought of thee
Comes like the scent of roses on the air,
Comes like the spring to make the world more fair,
Comes like a dream whose nameless agony
Welters in darkness through a stormy sea,
And drowns me in despair.

AL FRESCO

I

O! we weep beneath the starlight at the bitter
 thoughts that blight us,
 When the icy wind is freezing all the tender things
 that grow,
 And around us in the darkness there are noises that
 affright us,
 Eerie lamentations sobbing out of hearts attuned to
 woe,
 Like repentant spirits, moaning
 For the sins that wait atoning
 In a land where evil visions swim like vapours to
 and fro.

Every star is cold and pallid in the ebon vaulted sky,
 All the hills are black and sombre that o'ergloom the
 dreary plains,
 And along the dewless valleys wails a wind that
 seems to cry
 Like a maid whose heart is tortured by a bond her
 soul disdains,
 And a formless dread enfolds us,
 And a terror grips and holds us
 Till our blood is frozen wholly in our irresponsive
 veins.

'Tis a region of disaster where the thunders roll and
 bellow,
 And the earth is never wetted by a single drop of
 rain,
 Where along the pillared gorges streams of lightning
 lurid-yellow
 Scatter iron hills asunder as a thresher scatters
 grain,
 And where dusty columns, lifting
 One by one, are slowly drifting,
 And the sluits run gaping seaward, like red wounds
 across the plain.

Years on years for generations they have seldom
 felt the rush
 Of the thick and sudden waters tearing at their
 rootless sides,
 And for ages yet hereafter they will never see the
 blush
 Of a flower grace the morning, nor the swing of
 grassy tides,
 But with burning throats athirst,
 They will long for rain to burst
 Out of clouds whose fiery bosoms carry that and
 naught besides.

Here the dassies bark and chitter at the eagle
 swooping by,

And the meercats on their haunches sit and gaze
 into the glare,
 Seeing there a speck of danger that for human
 sight's too high,
 And the cobra sways his body while he fixes with
 his stare

Some small creature, terror stricken,
 And the rhythmic circles quicken
 Till the deadly stroke's delivered hissing flame-like
 through the air,

Here for ever through the darkness when the wind
 is moaning low,
 And the moonlight like a leprous skin enfolds the
 naked earth,
 You may hear the sighing whispers of the ghosts of
 long ago,
 As they glide about the places where they lived and
 had their mirth,

Sighing for the beauty faded
 From the homes no drought invaded
 When they loved, and worked, and idled in a time
 that knew no dearth.

Here we reach no bourne of pleasure in the daylight
 or the darkness,
 'Tis a land of blistered ruin like an inner court of
 hell,

All the hills are black and barren, and the plains are
 bare and parkless,
 And each homestead, long deserted, breaks and
 crumbles like a shell,
 Therefore we will also leave it
 Like the dead, but never weave it,
 As they have, into those fibres that remember all
 things well.

II

O ! WE laugh beneath the starlight at the little
 things that please us,
 When the wind is blowing westward o'er the misty
 eastern hills,
 And the swaying branches rustle till the leaves begin
 to tease us
 With a gentle titillation as of faintly fluttered frills,
 That touch a neck all creamy,
 White, and curved, and very dreamy
 When its columned beauty pulses to her winning
 laughter's thrills.

But from laughter down to sorrow in a moment we
 are drifted
 When we think of all the anguish that awaits us in
 the years,
 Not a thought have we for pleasure when we lie
 with eyes uplifted

To the bitter stars above us that are callous to our
tears,

Then our souls are full of terror,

And we see as in a mirror

Two sad figures bent and broken underneath a
weight of fears.

And when the moonlight slowly over hill and vale
approaches

Till all the stars are pallid in the silver flooded sky,

Silver belts, and swords, and crosses, and a train of
silver coaches

Slipping into deeper distance of the void's immensity,

Then perchance a sudden glory

Like the magic of a story

Told of fairies floats about us and we cease to weep
and sigh.

For our thoughts are glad to travel like sweet airs
and odours blowing

Over gardens where the sunlight like a benediction
lies,

Clothing leaves, and buds, and blossoms in a colour
richly glowing,

And flushing into beauty all the scented mysteries,

Breeze and odours sweetly mingle

With the music from the dingle,

Where the raptured birds are singing up a scale of
ecstasies.

Not a moment then we linger in the shadowed vales
 and passes
 Where disaster waits to snare us in a net of poisoned
 skeins,
 Quick we leave the rocky ridges, and the land of
 faded grasses,
 And with joyous pulses beating reach the flower
 fretted plains,
 White, and gold, and red and yellow,
 Every flower with its fellow
 Dancing for the joy of living in the time of summer
 rains.

Ever higher now like eagles that would reach the
 empyrean,
 Up our spirits soar enraptured with the fervid dreams
 of love,
 And we seem to hear the music of a faintly chanted
 pæan
 Flowing down the silver heavens from some choir
 far above,
 Singing very sweetly for us
 In a soft and holy chorus,
 Till our pulses beat together like the pinions of a
 dove.

O ! the beauty of the starlight and the moonlight
 there around us,

When the balmy wind is cooling all the sorrows of
the earth,
And the mighty constellations with their majesty
astound us,
And we see the cloudy wonder of a universe in birth,
And we hear the music winging
Down the heavens, like the singing
Of a happy angel choir changing misery to mirth.

ODE ON THE UNIFICATION OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN COLONIES

I

THERE was a time imbued with mutual hate,
When anger like a fire,
Burned from our heart the impulse to aspire ;
Yea ! all our souls were brought to low estate,
For pride o'erbrimmed us, and we would not wait
On nature's slower and more certain gait,
But in a fret of ire
Leaped the abyss, and marred our great desire.
Abject and dire
Was our close bondage to a boonless fate,
For we were blind ;
Our reason was enslaved, our love a flower
Hurt by the wind
Of passion, that was still an evil power
To blight the mind ;
Destructive as a hot volcanic shower
That leaves but dust behind.

II

We only reaped what we had sown ;
Our thoughts were seeds
Which, year by year more deeply grown,
And with each season farther blown,

O'erran with weeds
 All the remote still corners of the land,
 And spoiled what nature planned ;—
 Arrested the incalculable growth
 That moving up from age to age,
 Wins us to leave barbaric sloth,
 And checks the beast's impetuous rage,
 Until we gain the strength to go,
 Heedless of the opposing foe,
 Who only batters flesh and blood,
 But cannot hurt that sense of good
 Which lifts us to the starry skies,
 And helps us to devise
 Immortal harmonies.

III

There is in nature, if we hear aright,
 A calling voice that leads to light ;
 A low, soft voice
 That all the creatures of the veld obey ;
 A power is on the earth, and in the grey
 Cool dawn, when all the choristers rejoice,
 And in each atom of the universe,
 Whether it lie within a frozen sea
 Inert in seeming death,
 Or flash as light across immensity ;
 A power omnipotent that stirs
 In every vagrant breeze and passing breath,

That sometimes in a lift
 Of sudden light, when all the air is still,
 Unfolds the deeps of being to our gaze,
 And shows us the eternal flow and drift
 Of fluid matter in whose windless haze
 For ever broods the unfathomable Will ;
 A power that gives the pansy at our feet
 Strength to endure the heat,
 That whirls the nebulous mist in ordered rings,
 And in a bird note sings,
 That helps the deeper vision of the soul
 To see the spacious beauty that enfolds and lights
 the whole.

IV

As the spring wakes and breathes,
 Feeling the gladness of the wider skies,
 And dreaming of a glory under wreaths
 Of fragrant mysteries,
 So do we stir and move,
 Touched in the very essence of our being,
 By some great force that issues from above,
 That frees our reason, and unclouds our seeing,
 And warms our blood to pulses of a universal love.

V

Brothers we are, not merely of the flesh,
 For in dark years behind us, when the world

Like a great broken vessel on the deep,
 Weltered through unimaginable fears,
 And murder, with red eyes upon the cross,
 Slew thousands in the tender name of Christ,
 We fought together for the higher right,
 Holding in check the fell advancing hosts
 That dreamed of carnage, while their cruel lips
 Moved to the music of a Christian prayer.
 Yea ! in the desperate ages lately gone,
 When limbs were shredded like a fleece of wool,
 And men, immured for ever from the light,
 Were starved of water and the meanest fare,
 Netted like birds, hung in the festering sun,
 Scourged till the quivering weals of ravaged flesh
 Oozed blood and sweat together, thrown to beasts
 Like offal from a reeking shambles, maimed
 And seared, and blinded with malignant rage
 By those whose power the breath of freedom blew
 Into oblivion like a wisp of smoke
 That drifts against the edges of a gale,
 We stood opposed to bigots and their sway,
 And brake the sword of selfish dominance.
 And, since so often in the hideous past,
 We stood together, fronting evil days,
 Like yon broad mountain that the lightnings smite,
 And the storms rend for ever, on whose face,
 After the violent tillage of the years,
 Shines yet the sweet assurance of the dawn,

Let us clasp hands to help the world again,
And ease the anguish of her ceaseless pain.

VI

At last we mete the stature of our race.
Compact and whole,
Awake in brain and soul,
Each lifts him from his ineffectual place,
Where lately shadows of disgrace
Blotted the sunlight from his face,
And chilled his feet to use a sullen pace.
Towards the hills again we lift our eyes.
There on the heights we see another goal,
And waiting to be won, a greater prize
Than any we had reached before.
We feel another sense, a wider law
Guides us along the peaceful way,
Rich with the triumphs that accrue
When homely labour wakes the day,
And, shaking down the morning dew
From seeded grass and flowery spray,
Goes out into the pregnant field
To gather or assist the yield.
We see the burning desert blush
To beauty, and we see the rush
Of water o'er the scant karoo,
Where harsh and wizened herbage grew,

And torrid winds were wont to blow,
Piling up drifts of sand instead of snow.

VII

Let us take hands together here at last,
Let us clasp hands across long leagues of veld,
And may the love within our hearts be felt
Even in the fervour of a grip so fast,
No burning recollection of the past
Will loose it, and no heats of passion melt
Our new-cemented brotherhood ; how vast,
When the glad morning swings his golden belt
Of light athwart the world, gleam in the sky
The splendours of a cloudy continent,
Fulfilled of the dawn's peace, and grace and power,
So too will this fair Africa be high,
And bright, and strong from this millennial hour
Wherein old hate dies in new love's content.

VIII

And we the latest born of all her daughters,
In the great years to come
Will not be dumb
When she, sole mistress of the roaring waters,
Whose gift of freedom brought us
Out of the tangle of our own mistrust,
Calls on our needed aid
To stand beside her in the battle-dust ;

Nor be afraid,
 Nor selfishly endeavour to evade
 The wider duty for a rooted lust
 Of power still unchastened by the years.
 Yea ! though the future bring
 Seasons of lean accomplishment, and fears
 Destroy our hopes like fires that foil the spring,
 And spread a mourning mantle o'er the earth,
 We will not fail,
 Marching as men through desolation's dearth,
 By rugged hill and vale,
 In patient pilgrimage,
 To reach at last the heights where England towers,
 Holding aloft the flag of freedom ; high
 Above the fretful rage
 And futile opposition of the powers,
 That know the why
 Of her great strength, but will not learn thereby.

IX

Now let the trumpets blare
 Their sweet, glad music through the crystal air !
 Unfurl the banners to the genial sky,
 And in this deep dug grave
 Let us be brave
 To bury where no vision may descry
 The smallest record of the foolish past,
 That so at last—

Unmindful of the thoughts that fostered hate—
 We may encourage a diviner fate,
 And move along
 Unto the music of a joyous song,
 While all the banners wave,
 And the great trumpets blare
 Their sweet, glad music through the crystal air.
 Sing, sing with joy around this happy grave,
 Where all the past lies dead,
 While future triumphs beckon us ahead.

X

Above the night where all the hills are clear,
 Where not a shadow falls, nor any tear,
 And no one shivers in the grip of fear,
 Above the night !

Above the darkness of our low desires,
 Where all the soul yearns upward and aspires,
 And feels no more the sting of earthly fires,
 Above the night !

Above the fevers of our wasting hours,
 Where all the land is full of fragrant flowers,
 And o'er the dawn no cloudy darkness lowers,
 Above the night !

Above these jarring voices into peace,
Where every season brings a sure increase,
And wheat is garnered with the snowy fleece,
Above the night !

Guide us, O Lord ! along the quiet ways
That lead where justice suffers no delays,
And unto Thee for ever be the praise
Above the night !

MAÍRIN

Bow your heads
All ye common-thinking men !
Here's a soul whose presence sheds
Light as when
From the east a glory spreads,
And we see the rosy flower of the dawn unfold again.

Her sweet eyes
Smile like waters in a dream
That reflect unfathomed skies,
And the gleam
Of such moonlight mysteries
As elude us in the glamour of some wood-enchanted
stream.

And her face
Is delicious laughter's shrine,
Where joy sparkles to replace
Thoughts that pine,
Like young flowers in a space
Where no dew may fall at even, and by day no light
may shine.

Thoughts she has
That are pure and sweet as light,
When through all the radiant grass

Keen delight
Of the flowering dawn doth pass,
And the day draws rosy curtains round the chambers
of the night.

Where she is,
Summer riches bloom and reign,
Scents of rose and clematis
Breathe again,
Zephyrs waft their store of bliss
Soothing softly into comfort all the brows that throb
with pain.

Since she rose
Like a star serene and bright,
All the earth with wonder glows,
For such light
From her magic presence flows
That all sorrows veil their faces and go softly out
of sight.

The moon gleams
And I see her lovely form,
Clothed in those enchanting beams,
White and warm,
Haunting all my sinless dreams
Like a lily bravely lighting all the darkness of a
storm.

Tranced deep
Like some lover overwrought
By love visions in his sleep,
I am caught
Unto blissful heights that keep
All my spirit pure and single to the levels of her
thought.

MUSIC

HILL grasses waving red
Sing on the mountain head,
 And thus
 For us
Is music's volume fed ;

Music that from the hills
Falls with those crystal rills
 Whose veins
 The rains
Swell into dulcet thrills ;

Music that o'er the edge
Of some wind-curling ledge
 Doth wing
 To sing
Soft through the quivering sedge ;

That fills the poppy's breath
With languid hints of death,
 Till themes
 For dreams
Possess her drowsy wraith ;

Sweet notes that trill and shake
Where babbling waters slake
 The grass
 And pass
To where the meadows bake ;

Music the seas outpour
When all their breakers roar,
 And curl
 To hurl
Their might along the shore ;

That ripples on the beach
With lilt of joyous speech,
 When all
 The squall
Is past our listening reach ;

Music the raindrops make
When on a windless lake
 They fall
 And all
Their winking jewels break ;

That o'er thuriferous heights
Wings its clear silver flights
 When rain
 Again
Sings what the flower delights ;

Music that from the cells
Of swaying flower-bells,
 Will sing
 To bring
The bees into her spells ;

That when the world is green,
From rapturous throats unseen,
 By sheaves
 Of leaves
Hid in a cloistral screen,

Sends through the sultry trees
Her song of summer ease,
 So sweet
 The heat
Throbs into harmonies ;

That in a gentler mood
Coos through the magic wood,
 To tell
 How well
Love is with song endued ;

That reaches gladder heights
When all the vernal lights
 Begin
 To spin
Their garment of rare sights ;

Music that helps the soul
To seize her lost control
 Of sense,
 Till thence
Light shows th' abandoned goal ;

And that when sorrows press
Unlocks its tenderness,
 To mend
 And end
Life's long enduring stress.

BALLAD OF NERO

WHERE'S Nero with his double chin,
His rusty beard and vinous lips
That sucked the breath of Hades in,
And uttered many wanton quips ?
Where are the awful games he planned,
That ached through such tremendous fears,
Men's faces laughed whose lives were banned ?
All's covered by the dusty years.

Where is he with his septic skin,
That oozed disease from sloughing tips
Of ulcers grown from seeds of sin ?
Where are his bloody tricks, the whips
That never ceased to scourge his land ?
Where are his tridents, nets and spears,
With which the bravest were unmanned ?
All's covered by the dusty years.

Where are his ghoulish eyes, wherein
Vile visions rioted, like ships
Of demons through some murky din ?
Where are his gory moods ? His slips
Down reeking slopes ? The fiery brand
That flared to light his peoples' tears ?
The fearful lusts he woke and fanned ?
All's covered by the dusty years.

ENVOY

Ah, princess mine ! this dune of sand
Whereon each struggling soul uprears
Its tower of dreams, can never stand.
All's covered by the dusty years.

AT IZELI

HERE when the warm days come
An angel hath her home,
And where her white feet move
Life leaps to light, and love
Forgets the cold.

Close round her drooping eaves
The vine uncurls its leaves,
And the red lips of day
Kiss every budding spray
To fire and gold.

Peace like the peace of skies
When the white evening lies,
As in a dream of rest,
Against the windless west,
Is in her eyes.

Her hands are like soft wings;
And round her feet the spring's
Glad grasses wash and wave,
And dewy rushes lave
Her ankle-rings.

Her flower-soft gown that droops
From where her lithe neck stoops
When summer bows her head,
Hath bands of various thread
Caught in gold loops,

And from its viewless seams
The scent of vernal dreams
Shakes itself out, and flows
Round her as round a rose
 Rose odour teems.

Held up in warm sweet light
Her palms are pink and white,
Like roses washed in milk;
And all her hair's soft silk
 Is amber bright.
From her sweet breathing lips,
Sweet as whence honey drips,
A sound of rapturous notes
Comes, as from singing throats
 Glad music slips.

Through all her nights and days
She walks in flowery ways ;
Where warm white waters run,
Breathing against the sun
 Her footstep strays ;
The winds of dawn are sweet
That blow from where her feet,
Sandalled with silver shoes,
Have touched the scented dew
 Before the heat.

The light of long warm hours
Distils into her flowers,
And all their wakening veins
Get from slow-falling rains
 And twinkling showers
All colours of magic fires,
Born of her soul's desires ;
In her enchanted glades
Never a soft bud fades
 Or droops or tires.

Under her green-roofed trees
She lies for noontide ease,
Hearing, as one in sleep
Hears while the reapers reap,
 The hum of bees.
Shed petals of white flowers
Strew all her leafy bowers,
Or on the slow-drawn tide
Like down-soft feathers glide
 Through windless hours.

For her the glad birds call,
The dawns are musical,
And through the sunwashed skies
For her the butterflies
 Like petals fall.

In the still fervid noon
She gives her soul for boon
To flowers and fragile things
That have thin gauze for wings,
Lest any swoon.

When the first filmy light
Ambers the wings of night,
All her green mountains flush,
And every fragrant bush
Sparkles delight ;
Softly at eve she goes
From lily bud to rose,
And at a touch they bloom,
And in the silver gloom
Their hearts uncloze.

Under her full-orbed reign
She sees wide fields of grain
Roll out along the wind
Heavy with gold, or thinned
By frozen rain,
Or 'neath mimosa boughs,
Domed like a golden house,
Close knots of panting sheep,
And by still pools asleep
Noon-drowsy cows.

She in her garden's round
Is life, and light and sound ;
All swift desires are hers,
And the first vein that stirs
 Beneath the ground.

But when her feet stray forth
Life fades, and love and mirth,
And all the green days droop
What time her swallows troop
 For cold and dearth.

THE FORSAKEN GARDEN

AH ! sweet were the days, and the nights and the
showers,

In the garden we loved that is now a waste,
Where rank weeds strangle the helpless flowers,
And the paths are choked, and the beds defaced,
And the vines hang loose from the wall, displaced
By wild wet weather and wrecking storms,
And the mould is riddled by restless worms.

Ah ! sweet were the days, and the nights and the
apples,

In the garden we loved that is now undone,
Where the light sheds twinkling globes and dapples
As it filters through from the glaring sun,
And the grass is pierced by the field rat's run,
And the drouth hath withered the trees, and the fruit
Gets no more life from the shrivelled root.

Ah ! sweet were the days, and the nights and the
guavas,

In the garden we loved that neglect hath spoiled,
Where the clods are harder than hard-baked lavas,
And the net hangs rent where the spider toiled,
And the snake lies close in the rose bush coiled,
And the soothing sap of the spring is dry
That moved last year when the sun rode high.

Ah ! sweet were the days, and the nights and the
peaches

In the garden we loved that is all but dead,
Where soft light gleamed on the soft green reaches,
And the singing world was assailed of dread,
And dawn scents blew from the violet bed,
And all things lovely, and sweet and rare
Trembled and glowed in the balmy air.

Ah ! sweet were the days and the nights and the
roses,

In the garden we loved that is now forlorn,
And sweet as the scent of a flower that closes,
When the pale light fades and the night is born,
So sweet was the breeze from the tossing corn
That rippled our hair with its odorous breath
Or ever we dreamed of this garden of death.

SUMMER DAWN

MAIDEN-MODEST morn,
Clear and cool and sweet,
Out of darkness born
Like the golden wheat
That o'er the dull black mould rolls like a billowing
sheet.

Blowing fields of grass,
Lush and dewy bright,
Open and amass,
Shadows break to light,
While day with speeding shafts puts all the stars to
flight.

O'er the waking sky
Changing colour streams,
And soft breezes sigh
Just awoke from dreams,
To shepherd little clouds that fear the noonday
beams.

From the mountain top
Through a veil of gold,
Swooping eagles drop
Till their wings unfold
And lift them free again into their native cold.

Hares with spangled ears
Which the light shines through,
Till each tip appears
Like a flame in dew,
Gambol with noiseless mirth, nor fear the open view.

Where the water lies,
Cool from yesternight,
Rainbow-tinted flies
Flicker into sight,
Or poise on viewless wings and quiver with delight.

Every grassy vlei
Is alight with flowers
That adore the day,
While the morning hours
Heavy with laden sweets, await the noonday
showers.

Filmy shreds of mist
Cling about the hills,
Pale as amethyst
That a rose light fills,
And softer than the down wherein a young bird
thrills.

Down the mountain side
Dance the little streams,

Singing as they glide
(Ah, the airy themes !)
Of crystal pools above that nurse the lily's dreams.

Little shaded ponds
Show the graceful ferns
All their dripping fronds
Glassed in lucid urns,
Whereon no ripple moves, or purling eddy turns.

All the slopes are bright
With the ardent bees,
Each impetuous sprite,
Dreaming not of ease,
Hurries, and dives and rolls through ravished
nectaries.

Now the partridge calls
From the rosy height,
And the waterfalls
With his voice unite,
Two crystal songs of joy that mingle their delight.

All the dawn is glad
With tempestuous song,
Birds that never had
Any sense of wrong
Are gathered to rejoice in one exultant throng.

Loud the music pours
From each glowing tree,
Falls, and swings and soars,
And with its melody
Thrills all the living world into an ecstasy.

All the glowing earth,
All the radiant sky
Ring with careless mirth,
Shout, and thrill with glee,
And the enamoured world awakes to harmony.

SALVATION JANE

LET us go down, O heart, into the deep,
The black slush levels where the wretched sleep,
And heavy odoured poisons breathe and creep
 Along the sweating walls,
Let us go down where little children's skins
Are sloughed away for all their father's sins,
Yellow and wrinkled as when frost begins
 And tettered leafage falls ;

Where reeking dens are choked with sodden forms,
Close as a carcase with its seething worms,
That riot blindly into knotted swarms,
 And roll, and slip and coil,
Where unimaginable horrors rage,
And men enjoy not any heritage
Of air, or light, or comfort to assuage
 Their weariness of toil ;

Where the poor mother with her milkless breast
Moans o'er her starving babe, and cannot rest
For the cold fear that irks her ; where the best
 Have not the souls of beasts ;
Let us go down where heaven is not a dream,
Nor hell a fear for all its lurid gleam
Shed on them mindless ; where the fetid stream
 Froths with polluting yeasts ;

Where men are like a stagnant pool that breeds
 All nature's bale of slimy filth, and feeds
 Innumerable broods of deadly seeds,

Mildews and charnel damps,
 And vile miasmas, like the breath of pits
 Choked with corruption, where mad passion hits
 With random stroke, and in blaspheming fits
 Men curse their gnarling cramps ;

Where lewdness unabashed, and lust abide,
 And ravenous hunger with his hollow side
 Dreams of a feast, and wakes all wistful eyed,

Where nothing is but dearth,
 Or garbage, and such dry and sateless food
 As worms eke out of logs of rotted wood,
 And men are sunk into a sullen mood
 For want of wholesome mirth ;

Let us go down, O heart, nor be afraid,
 God being with us, let us not evade
 His sole desire that we should bring the strayed

Back to the narrow path ;
 Sharp thorns are better than the ease they have ;
 Thorns on the way until they reach the grave
 Will bloom beyond its portals ; let us save
 All who have earned His wrath.

He gave His life, His pure immaculate heart
 Endured the railers of the street and mart ;
 All agonies were crowded in His part,

 All tortures, all despairs ;
 For these, O heart, for these so vile and low,
 His delicate being trod the path of woe ;
 Immortal love endured the sundering throe
 To make them sons and heirs.

O heart, remember He is here to-day,
 He moves us ; He upholds us on the way ;
 Let us be eager, anxious for the fray
 Against His tireless foes ;
 His foes and ours ; and ah, we would not fail
 In love and service to assist the frail ;
 He stooped to lift them, perished to prevail ;
 And as a spiced wind blows

Fragrant with odours from a land of light,
 So round the world for ever day and night
 His tender spirit breathes, annulling spite
 And hate and viler sins.

And we, O heart, would waft that healing balm
 Into the fetid gutters, till all harm
 Soothes into blessing, and the exultant psalm
 Drowns all these earthly dins.

A MANY MAIDS

SWEET, there be some whose lustrous eyes
Draw love into their paradise,
And some there be whose rosy lips
Make him destroy his jewelled ships,
Others whose fairer skins entice
Hot worship of their breasts of ice,
Whose siren voices unwithstood
Poison the channels of his blood ;
Some whose calm brows love cannot see
But straight he bows his gallant knee,
Whose faces make him dream of God,
And see the path the martyrs trod ;
And some whose regal beauties shine
Till they abash his amorous eyne,
Whose lissom bodies drag him down
To haunt the taverns of the town ;
And there be some that give him grace
To feel his shame and veil his face ;
Some whose frail fingers quench his fire,
And tune for him a fairy lyre,
Whose music through enchanted hours
Sings like a bee among the flowers ;
And some whose golden nets of hair
Hold him a drooping captive there ;
Some in whose service he will go

Where all the demons work him woe ;
Let all these pass, for yet I find
More beauty in the sun and wind,
In nature's moods a deeper sense
Of that divine intelligence
That wakes the lily where she sleeps
In the cold ooze of glassy deeps,
And in the fretted minds of men
Puts yearnings for a wider ken.

BELOW AUGHRABIES

I HAD a dream of travel ; on a day
When shimmering fire swathed the iron roofs,
And scarlet flowers flamed along the kloofs,
Hot with the whole of summer, far away
I saw between two boulder knotted cones
A road now seldom trodden down by hoofs,
And lonely as a track bestrewn with bones.

Like a red ribbon stretching through the haze,
With many a sinuous turn and sudden dip
It wound along, and passed a hanging lip
Of polished rock that quivered in the blaze,
Like some huge carcase swollen out of shape
Then through a sandy waste I saw it slip,
With ragged sluits on either side agape.

There where it passes through the sweltering neck
It looks as raw and gruesome as a cut
Made in coarse flesh ; and every shapeless rut
Is like a sanguine smudge across a deck
Where blood interprets silence, giving form
To horrors that were here endured to glut
The insatiate fever of a passion storm.

Beyond the hills in that mysterious west
Whereto the sun for ever journeys down,
Is there not also, though all nature frown,

A guerdon that will bloom to crown the quest
 Essayed to reach the secret of those skies
 Whose fierce refulgence burns the desert brown,
 And stings all nature into agonies ?

May one not find in all that arid tract,
 Where sand dunes seem to quicken and retreat
 Under the weary tread of aching feet,
 And where dry bushes by the wind are stacked
 In gravelike hummocks all about the plain,
 Which looks as if an army met defeat
 Here, and abandoned all its heaps of slain.

May one not find a sweet white-watered lake
 Filled to the brim with little dancing pleats,
 Whose every pulse with mellow music beats,
 And at whose shores shy desert creatures slake
 Their gloaming thirst ? or yet a little pool
 Fed by a fountain hid in dim retreats
 Where drooping ferns are green, and fresh and cool ?

Or if not these, perchance some rarer thing,
 A wondrous jewel with its soul of light,
 Whose coruscations blaze along the night,
 When the queen moon within her silver ring
 Transmutes the golden flower of the dawn
 Into the frosted lily of the night,
 That shines to make the desert less forlorn ?

A garden full of roses one might see,
And luscious fruits as sweet as honey-cells,
Lilies in clouds, and flaming flower-bells,
All gathered in a plot of greenery ?
Maybe the wind that here is like a blast
Roaring about these sandy desert swells,
Will be less harsh when these bare plains are passed ?

Thus in my dream I mused on the event,
But doubtfully, as one who fears his fate,
And with reluctant feet goes through a gate
Leading to new adventures, so I went
With halting steps along the dusty way,
Holding within me still a close debate,
As if each reason held an equal sway.

Forward I stepped with languid motion ; there
Beyond those low black hills that held my gaze,
Each one aquiver in the blinding haze,
As if it felt the fierce inveterate glare,
And longed for cloudy shadows to appear,
My hope was to discover smoother ways,
And balmier breezes than may wander here.

And though I knew that Hope is but a jade
Who holds her tinsel jewels in the sun,
That still recede however fast we run ;
Yea ! even as rainbows draw away and fade,

Leaving the gloomy sky devoid of light,
So all Hope's trinkets vanish ; one by one
They disappear from our expectant sight.

Nathless I turned into the hollow track,
Walking through flames of air towards the west,
Nor halted till I reached a barren crest
Between two stony kopjes ; here, alack !
The prospect held no better view ; dry sluits
With store of ragged bushes, seemed the best
Nature could furnish to assuage her mutes.

For now a ban of silence held the hills,
And the lone plain, and all the choking vales,
Audible silence sobbing into wails,
Sans echo, like the ghostly voice that thrills
Only the nerves of him attuned to feel
Its inward murmur ; here no speech avails,
Nor sound of laughter breaks the dusty seal.

A scurf of salt that made mine eyelids ache
Shone like a glare of snow beneath a ridge
That showed a spine of naked rocks on edge ;
And far away I saw the river break
Into a misty vapour where it poured
Between two granite columns, o'er a ledge
That tore the waters till they fumed and roared.

Thither I bent my steps with sudden haste,
And heedless when my feet broke through the crust,
Of how the acrid powder rose in dust,
Adding a greyness to the silent waste,
And biting into every open wound
Cut by the wind, as when a poison rust
Chars all the living fibres of the ground.

Now the sun dropped towards his wonted rest,
And looking back I saw the boulders gleam
Like ruddy roses in a giant's dream,
Magnificent along each glowing crest
Shone the great blooms ; and all the dewless slopes,
Where the dry thunders roll, and crash and scream,
Flushed into flower like phantasmal hopes ;

Fruitless as those, and scentless ; daily here
All the low hills are reaches red with bloom,
Whose flowers fade and leave a deeper gloom,
That holds the spirit in a spell of fear,
And chills the heart until it scarcely throbs.
Far down I heard the plunging waters boom,
And the dull echoes thicken into sobs.

Beneath the sultry shadow of a rock
I stepped at last, and knew my journey done,
For thence I saw the waters flash and run,
And heard them rush, with immemorial shock

That shivered through the ground on which I stood,
 Under a cavern where no ray of sun
 May ever reach the stealthy stealing flood.

Into a cauldron that the stream had carved
 Out of black granite, grinding ever round
 Sharp flints and rubble here in plenty found,
 The waters plunged, and in midleap were halved,
 Cut by a jutting tooth that held its post
 Though all about it other rocks were ground
 Flush with the lip o'er which the flood was tossed.

Down in the mighty cup a crudded broth,
 With iridescent bubbles foamed and boiled,
 As if beneath it swarthy stokers toiled,
 Feeding a furnace to produce this broth,
 And keep it seething for Apollyon's host ;
 And far below the snaky river coiled,
 Gliding away as strangely as a ghost.

Sometimes a sudden fissure at my feet
 Sent up a cry that sounded like a wail
 From souls who know their pleas will not avail
 Though all their banded legions should repeat
 Aves unceasing with united breath ;
 This was the river moaning in its mail
 Of iron rock, like one who strives with death.

Among the boulders lying all awry,
 And scored with formless cracks on every side,
 Stood thorny scrub, and trees that must have died
 Long ages since, so white they looked and dry,
 That once enriched the region with their fruits,
 And graced the landscape with their plummy pride,
 Dead now and wasted to the very roots.

But all along the eastern slopes, I know
 The aloes bloom and flourish through the year ;
 In crowded rocks the hardy prickly pear
 Fixes its roots, and searches far below
 For moisture that will plump her angry blades ;
 All else seems charred to ashes ; out of gear
 Are nature's works, and futile all her aids.

Now in the fading glamour of the sky
 I came to where the river's sluggish tide
 Moved like old Lethê, slow and smooth and wide,
 And noiseless through the gloom ; expectantly
 I stood upon the dim and spectral shore,
 For prescient tremors made my throbbing side
 Pause on a pulse of unaccustomed awe.

Trembling I stood, and feared to look behind ;
 The fibres of my being felt the breath
 Of noisome odours from the vaults of death ;
 An emanation like a clammy wind

Disturbed the chemic forces of my blood,
 And as one pales who sees an angry wraith,
 I paled and faltered in my shaken mood.

Where, in this ominous silence, will I see
 The fiend, or ghost, or other fearsome sight,
 Whose presence through the slowly darkening night
 Exhales an essence full of enmity,
 And fills me with the dread of those unknown
 And nameless forces, by whose secret might
 Reason herself is banished from her throne ?

Scarce had the question budded in my brain,
 When there before me like a coil of rope
 Lying involved upon a sandy slope,
 I saw the naked horror's scaly train
 Slowly unclothe, and from the middle ring
 Upreared an ancient head that seemed to grope
 Blindly about with rhythmic lift and swing.

Is this the very monarch of the pit,
 Or some belated monster of the prime,
 Whose form was nurtured in the tepid slime
 Long aeons since ? the creature seemed no whit
 Less terrible than those diluvian mounds
 And hills of flesh, that in uncharted time
 Floundered and heaved about the lakes and sounds.

From side to side he swayed his crusted head,
On which the lichens of unnumbered years
Grew like a scurf, and down beside his ears
Hung hoary mosses, dry, and sere and dead ;
A sweat of horror oozed about my skin
To feel his motions slowly soothe my fears—
So must the devil soothe the sense of sin.

His eyes that were as dull as molten lead
On which a film of cooler metal grows,
Were full of sloth, and cunning and old woes ;
Yet now they held me in a numbing dread,
A fear that seemed to creep along my bones ;
I felt like one immersed in arctic snows,
Whose rigid body neither breathes nor moans.

Then the froze moment passed, and all his length,
Coil after coil dissolving, seemed to fade
Into the sultry night's increasing shade.
Slowly I woke to feel returning strength
Enter my soul, and lying thus awake,
I wondered at the journey I had made,
And the cold vision of the monstrous snake.

THE MOUNTAINS

I LEANING in a weary mood of sorrow
Over the bridge, and gazing on the water,
Saw rushing waves that leaped, and fumed and
fretted,
And reached and clambered in a spiteful fury
To where against the bank a great mimosa
Lifted a golden globe into the ether,
And glowed to feel its roots rept out and floated
Hither and thither on the foaming current,
Unconscious in its joy of how the moments
Were tearing down its hold and place of anchor.
Even so a man in some wild flush of fortune,
Moves laughing through a region filled with furies,
Who smile unseen, and crush the hope he leans on,
And as he plunges downward into hades,
Send their fierce pæan raging through the heavens,
Chanting his doom, and how they wrecked his glory ;
Saw also all around me in the sunlight,
The beauty of ripe grass, whose waving vistas
Were amber rivers winding through the forest,
And peaceful vales whose silver threads of music
Came on cool gusts of wind across the meadows,
And mingled with the deeper voice beneath me,
As through the resonant roar of rolling breakers
Sometimes you hear the pipe of birds returning

Out of the storm that booms along the ocean.
And slowly, while I leaned, the lapsing river,
And all the sounds that blew about the morning,
Wrought on my soul, until a deeper music,
Not often heard by any sense of mortals,
Came to me from the far off mountain ridges,
Soft sounds that breathed in pauses, low and tender,
Like intimations from the lips of spirits,
Or fervid-thoughted words of earnest lovers,
When the close evening swoons into the twilight,
And still their voices, yearning through the silence,
Interpret feelings that till then they knew not—
Low liquid sibilations born of fountains,
And the clear whispers of the fragrant zephyrs,
That stir with dawn and touch the dewy grasses,
Until they twinkle like the starry heavens,
So all their jewels dance and shake together—
Lo ! thus a voice from all the shaggy ridges,
And bold brown peaks and gleaming promontories
And shadowed glens and passes of the mountains,
Came like a balm into my broken spirit.
“ Look up and see us in our silent places,
O ! fevered men with pain upon your eyelids,
And all about your hearts the fire of sorrow,
And on your lips the bitter gall of anguish,
And in your souls most hateful dreams and visions.”
Then I looked up, for I was one sore troubled
With biting pain upon my drooping eyelids,

And all about my heart the fire of sorrow
Burned as a furnace under seething waters
And on my lips the bitter gall of anguish
Lay sharp as poison on the fangs of serpents,
And fearful dreams possessed my stricken spirit.
And looking up I saw the quiet mountains
Crowned as with gold, and wearing purple raiment,
Glow in the sunset, full of peace and fearless,
Like kings indeed ; then I took heart, and sorrow,
Anguish, and pain, and hosts of fearful spectres
Left me at once, and with a cry exultant,
And heart fulfilled of only nature's comfort,
I took once more the path that climbed above me,
Whether to darkness or to light I knew not,
But with this faith, that still the end is silence,
And peace, and quiet that no creed can shatter.

FOR A BABY

I

BABY of our thought !
Thou art here at last !
Out of ether wrought
Somehow in the past,
A spirit thou hast come from the unmeasured vast.

The Eternal Mind,
Brooding on thy state,
Sent thee to unwind
Tangled skeins of fate,
Divine as angels are whose duties round thee wait.

And thy body grew,
All its parts aright,
Until born to view
Here, as from the night,
A flower is born complete with all its petals white.

Eyes of lustrous blue,
Grey, or shaded brown,
Skin of pearly hue,
Hair of softest down,
And lashes nursing dreams no older heart hath
known.

Beaming eyes that smile
At some lovelier sight
Than may here beguile
Aught to such delight,
For still thy visions flow from some uncharted height.

Ruby lips that glow
When some sweeter thought
Than we here may know,
By the young brain caught,
Flutters the tiny heart with its first feeling fraught.

Little dimpled hands,
Cool as morning dew,
Ere the wetted lands
Shimmer to the view,
And ere the shady hours their wonted heat renew.

Tiny twinkling feet
With their peach-bud toes,
Each a thing more sweet
Than sweet scents disclose,
Awakening keener joys than any flower that grows.

Brows as smooth and pure
As a dove's white breast,
For no sins obscure
Yet what there is best ;
Thy hopes are still asleep like young birds in their
nest.

Mouth whose low replies
 Name delicious things,
 Baby mysteries
 Deeper than the spring's
 Most secret heart conceives of vernal whisperings.

Eyelids lifted wide
 When the silver moon
 Hardly seems to glide
 Where the stars are strewn,
 A cold white disc that gleams as if from marble
 hewn.

But from where she broods
 In the holy night
 Showers upon the woods
 Her pale mystic light,
 And glammers all the earth from vale to iron height.

Joy it is to see
 Laughter brim thine eyes,
 Joy to know for thee
 All are sunny skies,
 That no old hopes will wake to croon their agonies.

Joy to know that yet
 Through thy baby years
 Life with all its fret
 Of infrozen tears
 Will have no power to hurt or cow thee with its fears.

And deep joy to feel
That no callous word,
Sharp as tempered steel,
Murderous as a sword,
Will from those lips outflash that are by thee adored.

That when winds are cold
Thou wilt surely be
Wrapped in cosy fold
On thy mother's knee,
A dreamer still of dreams from all disaster free.

Ah ! if we could go
Back to where thou art,
And with what we know
Make another start,
Methinks we might avoid errors of head and heart.

But we may not cheat
Thus the will of fate ;
Storms upon us beat,
Sorrows round us wait,
And wisdom these induce holds every soul elate.

Goodness only blooms
When our burning sighs
Wake it from the glooms
Where it closely lies,
Fearing to show its heart here in these frosty skies.

Yet our prayer to heaven
Is that thou may'st be
Pure as rain washed even
When the shadows flee,
A creature sweet and good through adversity.

II

Dost thou see God, my baby,
With those clear eyes ;
Dost thou see heaven's light shining
On fields of paradise ?

Dost thou see angels moving
On holy ways,
Whose feet have love to guide them
To where pale sorrow prays ?

Dost thou hear angel voices,
Most sweet and low,
Soft harmonies that whisper
Of things we do not know ?

And do the stars above thee,
In heaven's wide dome,
Shine on the path thou camest
From thy celestial home ?

Dost thou see flower spirits
Rejoice at dawn
Till all the air is fragrant
With their sweet souls upborne ?

Dost thou see fairies peeping
With glow-worm eyes,
Where ferny shades protect them
From over fervid skies ?

Dost thou see magic beauty
In white moonbeams,
And in the warm green valleys
The souls of vernal dreams ?

Doth each dawn's breath advise thee
Of what it brings
To fill the earth with music
That for thy pleasure sings ?

Do all dumb creatures love thee
For being so small,
Or do they know thy spirit
Is not mad passion's thrall ?

Dost thou hear music yearning
With those fine ears,
Pure notes that sweetly mingle,
And ease the night of fears ?

Dost thou hear waters singing
To leave the heights,
Songs that field creatures cherish
For all their cool delights ?

And do the birds beguile thee
To laughter's grace,
Till hands outreach to hold them
And smiles are on thy face ?

Do furry kittens please thee
With elfish wiles,
All rolled together playing
On velvet carpet piles ?

Do cows and oxen breathing
The sweet of grass,
Recall the bliss of living
Where rain-cool breezes pass ?

Do morning winds and evening
From green hill-heads,
Flush thy soft cheeks with colour
Till snow with ruby weds ?

And do the snowy bosoms
Of white doves gleam
Upon thy baby vision
Like lights about a dream ?

What joys are thine to gather,
What hopes will grow,
Before the frozen winters
Upon thy flowers blow ?

Dost thou see God, my baby,
With those clear eyes,
And do the angels whisper
To thee of paradise ?

LITTLE BABE, WE LOVE THEE

LITTLE babe, we love thee !
 Little baby, soft as down,
 On whose face no sorrows frown ;
 White and pink as roses are ;
 Cool as light that leaves a star,
 And into a lily's cup
 Sends a silver beam to sup
 Dewy nectar all the night,
 Till the day unfolds his light,
 And the little beam must fly
 To its palace in the sky.

Little babe, we love thee !

Little babe, we love thee !
 Little baby, sweet as breath
 Blown across a fragrant wreath ;
 Ever cooing like a dove :
 All in answer to our love :
 Chubby fists and rosy feet,
 Dewy mouth and all are sweet ;
 Not a part of thee but makes
 Merry music for our sakes :
 In thy pure and sinless eyes
 Laughs the light of paradise—

Little babe, we love thee !

JENNY

LITTLE Jenny, not so tall
As the big chair in the hall,
Goes with daddy to the kraal.

She would catch the silky goats
With the soft bells at their throats,
And the lambs with snowy coats.

Through the choking dust she goes,
Powdered thick from head to toes,
Yet her face with rapture glows.

Chasing this one—chasing all,
Till they leap upon the wall
Leaving her an empty kraal.

Then her glee at what she's done
Wreathes her little face with fun,
And she makes her daddy run ;

Following him with shrill alarms,
Till he leaps and spreads his arms,
Metamorphosed by her charms

Into ostrich, mouse or cat,
Or an ugly wrinkled bat,
“ Making faces ” through his hat.

Now the angry nurse appears
Calling Jenny, O, the tears !
O, the cries her daddy hears !

BABY, SEE

BABY, see the moon !
Baby looks,
Coos a baby tune
Never found in books.

Baby, see the stars !
Baby's eyes
Peep through trellis bars
At the spangled skies.

Baby, see the flowers !
Baby's mirth,
Less restrained than ours,
Bubbles into birth.

Baby, see the rain !
Baby's hand
Patters on the pane
Where the bright drops land.

Baby, hear the stream !
Baby's face
Softens to a dream
Of unearthly grace.

Baby, hear the birds !
Baby hears,
Deaf to human words,
Songs unused to fears.

Baby, hear the breeze !
Baby's head
Bends towards the trees
Whence the whispers spread.

Baby, hear the world !
Baby crows !
Flowers just uncurled
Never dream of snows.

ANIMA

I AM the wind that labours still
To cleanse the world of all disease ;
I am the sunlight on the hill,
The moonlight bloom of memories.

I am the night whose velvet wing
Lies gently on your bleeding woes ;
And I that small and perfect thing
The vermeil petal of a rose.

I am the cold that covers death,
From me are heat's elations sprung ;
I am the spirit's secret breath ;
Through me the ancient years are young.

I am the spectre of your fears,
The hope that sparkles out of doubt ;
The bitter waters of your tears
Through me for ever filter out.

I am the cloud that's darkly hung,
Shot through with lurid streams of fire,
From my omnific hand outflung
To chasten all malign desire.

I am the hate that freezes love,
The love that in the end shall wing
The very shafts of hate, to prove
My bounds encompass everything.

I am the byssus spun to hold
The fragile creatures of the deep,
And I the towering wave, outrolled
To carve the boulders from the steep.

I am the smallest thing there is,
Electric ashlar build me up,
And when their circles touch and kiss
Joy quivers in my golden cup.

I am the lowest rung of all,
Essential matter undisguised,
Yet greatest in the cosmic hall
Where all creations are devised.

I am the present and the past ;
Without me nothing was, or is,
Or will be ; I am first and last,
The quenchless fire of bale and bliss.

THE MOON

POETS behold thee with enraptured gaze,
 And all thy beauty in embalming verse
 Preserve for ever ; lovers love the rays
 That weave enchantment when the clouds disperse,
 And change familiar objects, daily seen,
 Into the merest dream of what they are,
 Until the eye is cheated into sight

Of visions that have been
 Asleep in thee since as a burning star
 Thy life drained out into the frozen night.

Most deftly dost thou draw the silver sheen
 Of ghostly robes around the ancient earth,
 To clothe with magic every common scene
 Till beauty breathes into a gauzy birth,
 Now in a sudden lustre seen to rise,
 And now to vanish as a spectre might,
 So fast the drowsy brain is puzzled deep

By all thy sorceries,
 And deems thee still a queen whose fairy sprite
 Glides on a dream into the land of sleep.

Queen of cool nights and dewy spangled hours,
 That swing their fragrant censers in the breeze,
 And fill the gemmy phials of the flowers
 With golden nectar for the vestal bees ;

Dost thou still hear those thunder-throated strains
 That never cease his tameless love to urge,
 Who, yearning upward with each globing wave,
 All other love disdains
 Because for thee in every heaving surge
 He feels the pain that holds him still thy slave ?

Nay, thou art dead, O ! silver-sheeted ghost !
 Long ages since thy spirit drew away
 Like some pale mist that leaves a lonely coast
 And, slowly fading, dies into the day ;
 In heaven perchance a lovely vision soars
 Of thy white soul from fostering travail free,
 Where spirits see thee who on earth were led,
 Resting their weary oars,
 By deep resilient tremors of the sea,
 To know how love thy punctual vigils fed.

A SPRING MORNING

MELODIOUS mornings greet me when
I pass beyond the haunts of men,
Into the hills yet cool and sweet
With dews that have not felt the heat,
Where clarion voices call and sing,
And all the veld is glad with spring.

Sharp through the rosy coloured skies
The partridge makes the echoes rise,
And with his silver-fluted voice
Gathers his comrades to rejoice,
Till all the coverts thrill with glee
To dawn's delirious minstrelsy.

Pale shoots the night hath given birth
Throw off their little mounds of earth,
And reaching softly forth to light,
Begin to leave their winter night,
Where in the cold their starving veins
Stirred to the music of the rains.

I see the wetted mountain heads
Burnished with silver, and the threads
Of little streams that dance and shoot
O'er many a storm uncovered root,

And where they wrinkle o'er a stone
A bunch of bubbles deftly blown.

High up the iron ridges gleam
Black in the sun ; white vapours stream
Trailing along the lower spurs
And sheets of shimmering gossamers
Gleam here and there like frosted glass
Through which I vaguely see the grass.

And sheep now-shorn begin to graze
In closing circles through the haze,
White as the young moon curving slow
Down through the dim green afterglow,
Or like a field of lilies, swayed
By winds the falling dews delayed.

The murmur of innumerable bees
Hums over waves of perfumed seas,
Pranked with the fluttering light of flowers
That love the young unheated hours,
And to the radiant day repeat
The dreams that keep their odours sweet.

In shady kloofs where waters run
That are not seen of moon or sun,
Grow modest ferns that love the cool
Unwindy corners of the pool,

And though they see no rosy heights
They to themselves are lovelier sights.

Such dawns to me bring more than all
The dainties of a festival,
The inner spirit moved yet still
O'er-flies the world's inveterate ill,
And in the pure delights of sense
Feels pulses of omnipotence.

THE MARTYR

I WILL not flinch ;
Though all the savage furies of the pit
Tear me with cruel talons, inch by inch,
And though fate's minions in their maniac fit
Shake my good purpose freely, I will go
Smiling to meet the most disastrous woe,
Closely in manhood's majesty arrayed ;
I will not faint in this unhonoured fight
Wherein men battle for what seemeth right,
So I resolve to-night
And dare not flinch.

I know the pinch
Of adverse fortune, how from hour to hour
The canker frets, as doth a hungry finch
Into the fruit whose heart he would devour.
I know the voids through which the lonely soul
Must journey, and I know the rugged way
That climbs and dips towards the hidden goal,
Obstructed with the refuse of decay
And bones of men long dead, who with delight
Essayed to reach some white and shining height,
But fell to darkest night,
Yet I'll not flinch.

ON THE MORNING SIDE OF NIGHT

ON the morning side of night,
When the stars are growing dim,
And the sagging moon is white
On the dusk horizon's rim,
There are visions that affright,
Pallid shapes that sway and swim,
Lolling in the opal mist,
Limp as corpses in a stream,
That the waters roll and twist,
Lift until their faces gleam,
Coldly by the moonlight kist,
Each a wraith that haunts a dream.

There are voices calling low
Through the slowly shifting gloom,
Silken sighs that slip and flow
All about a field of doom,
Echoes of the brooding woe
Heard when cannon cease to boom,
And the blood is oozing red
Into slipping sands beneath,
Where the men in staring dread
Quiver to the touch of death,
Turning on their sodden bed
For a simple ease of breath.

There are little clouds that shun
Open day's assaulting heat,
Cooling where their shadows run
In the wake of vernal feet,
Budding babies of the sun,
Born to make the season sweet ;
Softly in a soundless swoon
O'er the purple hills they go,
White as when the maiden moon
Shines on windless drifts of snow,
Hasting from the torrid noon
That would melt them in its glow.

There are spirits leaving earth
Now the greater light is near,
Who have watched a secret birth
Into some translucent sphere
Where a deeper sense of mirth
Laughs the anguish out of fear.
There are little winds that blow
From the dewy mountain plain,
Laving all the earth below,
Where the choking night hath lain,
Heavy as a pall of woe
On a soul distraught with pain.

There are songs the muses sing,
Sweet as echoes heard to fall
When the shaken harebells swing
Gently to the zephyr's call,
And the fervid throats of spring
Make the morning musical ;
There be lapsing waters then,
Cool with starbeams shining clear,
For delight of weary men
Whose uneven spirits veer
Like the lights about a fen
In the broken gusts of fear.

On the morning side of night
When the sun is on the roofs,
And his flashing beams of light
Overbrim the darkest kloofs,
Striking from each craggy height
Sparks that follow charging hoofs ;
There are joys that leap and shout,
Blithesome laughter of the crowd,
Birds in chorus all about,
Singing softly, singing loud,
While the darkness filters out
From each sun-discovered cloud.

RONDEAU

I

BE sad, O ! heart, when day appears
 Unleashing hosts of petty fears,
 When dewless light is in the sky,
 And all the fields are harsh and dry
 And hot beneath a sun that sears,
 When dust congeals unbidden tears,
 And drought shakes down the withered pears,
 And leaves are shrivelled all awry,
 Be sad, O ! heart !
 When all the dreary prospect wears
 A languor due to rainless years ;
 When pulsing hazes hurt the eye,
 And tender grasses shrink and die,
 And wheat hangs down its wilted ears,
 Be sad, O ! heart.

II

Rejoice, sad heart, when stars are forth,
 And moonbeams drape the drowsy earth,
 When all the hills like opals glow,
 And sleeping trees forget to grow,
 And night unlocks the gates of birth,

When grasses rest from burning dearth,
And shadows have no cooling worth,
And waters hardly seem to flow,
Rejoice, sad heart !

When winds no longer vex the firth
And hushed are all the songs of mirth,
Before the eastern headlands show
A gleam that wakes the world below,
Ere sleep unwinds her poppy girth,
Rejoice, sad heart !

THE MOUNTAIN FAIRIES

WE lie in the shade of a young grass blade,
Where the light is green and cool,
And all the noontide we rest by the side
Of an undiscovered pool.

We are here and there like motes in the air,
And down with the dancing rills,
Each merrily glides till the bubbling tides
Smooth out as they leave the hills.

We are flickering lights on the dew-drenched heights
Whenever the dawn appears;
And our sweet flower bells from their lucent wells
Shed nectar instead of tears.

In our secret garden where no frosts harden,
And never a wind is cold,
There are flowers inwrought with bright colours
 caught
From silver and fire and gold.

There are little rills, and their water spills
Right over a diamond ledge,
And it rests beneath in a circling wreath
Of feathery ferns and sedge.

We hide in the cell of a mountain bell,
 And dance in the arum's light ;
 On the sunbird's back we follow the track
 Of bees in their outward flight.

In the soft pink mesh of a mushroom's flesh
 We cling like a swarm of bees ;
 And we sip the dew as it filters through,
 Or falls from the shaken trees.

In the aloe blooms we have scented rooms
 For guests from the higher ridges,
 And they nestle there till the fervid air
 Grows cool enough for the midges.

When the pearl of heaven is brighter even
 Than all the planets that shine,
 We gather up dreams in her magic beams
 To strow on our children's eyne.

When the night-jar curves, and circles and swerves
 Like fumes from a wizard's broth,
 In a soothing swoon she moves to the tune
 We sing for a drowsy moth.

When the wild cat spits in her angry fits,
 And ruffles her hair like wire,
 We're teasing her skin with a viewless pin,
 And laughing to see her ire.

When the rhebok dreams that she hears the screams
Of eagles seizing her fawn,
'Tis our impish train bemusing her brain
With fears for a thing unborn.

When the young birds cheep in a helpless heap
And no one answers their cries,
We have hidden the nest for a harmless jest
By charming their mother's eyes.

When a mortal treads our emerald meads,
We open his eyes with fire,
And he feels again in his throbbing brain
The pulse of a pure desire.

His soul grows stronger with us the longer
He lives on this flowery height,
His brows unwrinkle, his glad eyes twinkle,
And he sees through a clearer light.

We are friends of all on this shining ball,
And pray for their health and rest ;
But nevertheless (since we must confess)
We love the children best.

THE OLD HORSE

LONELY, and old, and drooping
I see thee stand,
Whose neck was once a crescent
That loved the soothing hand,

Whose mighty heart grew tender
When she drew near,
Because her voice was gentle,
Her touch devoid of fear—

She whose small hands caressed thee
With childish glee,
And filled thy soul for ever
With one sweet memory—

Who when the children frolicked
About thy feet,
Moved with a tender caution
For things so soft and sweet ;

Whose nostrils smoked at morning
When frost was keen,
And all the valley sparkled
Like some enchanted scene ;

Who when the days were balmy
And blue skies beamed
Stood knee deep in the pasture
With heavy lids and dreamed ;

And who when storms of summer
From black clouds burst,
And torrents fumed and thundered
While nature slaked her thirst,

Flew from the barren mountain
To where, branch torn,
The great mimosas laboured
Not to be overborne ;

Who when the hunt was eager,
And springbok flew
Like birds across the roadway
That famished hawks pursue,

Stood staunch though every muscle
Was tense as wire,
While from thy back the master
Leaned low to aim and fire.

Or on the dewy upland
With flowers aglow,
And sweet with odours blowing
Whence man may never know,

Pricked up an ear to gather
Blithe songs that came
Up through the deep warm valleys
From birds with souls aflame ;

And when the cannon bellowed
Had eyes wide set,
Aglow to see the carnage
That made the red field wet,

Whose flanks were then aquiver,
And plashed with foam,
And whose broad breast plunged forward
To drive the great charge home ;

Now thy grey head is dreamless,
Thy limbs are stark,
And slowly round thee gathers
The deep, eternal dark.

Lonely, and old, and drooping
I see thee stand,
Whose neck was once a crescent
That loved the soothing hand.

WHEN

WHEN through the dark I hear the fall
Of waters sweetly musical,
When stars like winking jewels peep
Above a world returned to sleep,
And o'er the hills a veil of light
Comes softly flowing through the night,
Then aeons of old time are less
Than just a moment's happiness.

When through a garden scented sweet
I loiter with adoring feet,
And eyes that love the flowers so,
They blush into a warmer glow,
Each breathing all its soul away
Into the balmy air of day,
Then life's vicissitudes assume
The fragrance of a sweet perfume.

When from a mountain top alone
I see the season's vernal zone
Run gleaming over vale and hill,
When mists come up and softly fill
Each wooded kloof and dewy hollow,
And winds waft in the wayward swallow,
Then all the universe to me
Is but a thought's epitome.

When from his bald and windy height
 The eagle sweeps into the light,
 And curving out in viewless rings
 Holds all the earth beneath his wings,
 And from his azure vantage sees
 The summer's tossing revelries,
 Then all our sordid frets and schemes
 Drift by like insubstantial dreams.

When all the hills like emeralds glow,
 And winds in fragrant silence blow
 Along the valleys warm and deep,
 Heavy with scents that favour sleep,
 But fierce against the barren scaur
 Rush like unbitted steeds of war,
 Then all the veins of life desire
 The impulse of the season's fire.

When children in a joyous rout
 Make all the hills together shout
 With clear, glad echoes such as bring
 The angels down to hear the spring,
 And all the wakening fields rejoice
 In concert with the blissful noise,
 Then all the waste and drift of things
 Is covered by love's brooding wings.

When on the ocean's moaning breast
I lie in wonder's heart arest,
And hear her cosmic music roll,
As from some far and magic goal
Enchanted voices of applause
Float up from visionary shores,
Then all my soul is like the sky
When not a cloud is sailing by.

When softly from the breathing earth
I see the grasses having birth,
When buds appear, and flowers dress
The windy hills with loveliness,
And in each newly verdured vale
The lilies shine, serene and pale,
Then Hope, awakened from her dream,
Renews again her sheeny gleam.

A CATCH

GREEN leaves, with the green light under,
And the red above,
Burns there in your veins, I wonder,
The fire of love ?

Wild lands that are rent asunder,
Where fierce men rove,
Grows there in your dense woods yonder
The flower of love ?

Old earth o'er whose face the thunder,
And lightnings move,
Is there left in thy heart to plunder
One spark of love ?

QUEEN VICTORIA—MEMORIAL ODE

WE have not grief enough, nor tears, nor sighs
 For our dead Queen whose life was like the skies,
 Pure, and clean, and sweet
 As where the soft winds meet
 To lift the mists that would obscure the light ;
 And calm and strong for right
 As where great hills unite
 To guard their flowery fields from soiling feet.

Our grief is but a feeble throb of pain
 For one whose noble heart and righteous brain,
 Without a doubt or pause,
 Assigned the hidden cause,
 And in the sand at once discerned the gold,
 Whose soul had power to hold
 All goodness, and controlled
 Her people more through love than rigorous laws,

 Whose genius was for liberty, and drew
 Grave statesmen to accept her wider view ;
 Who mourned when we were sad,
 Was with our laughter glad,
 In all vicissitudes our mother still ;
 Who with a flawless will,
 And heaven directed skill
 Changed in her time to goodness what was bad.

If all the tears for all afflictions shed,
 If all the sorrows lavished on the dead
 Were in a moment brought
 To penetrate our thought,
 Such gathered anguish hardly could express
 The unassuaged distress,
 And sense of emptiness
 Which aches through all the world from hut to court.

Yet though our weeping may for aught avail,
 And sorrow's theme is but an idle tale,
 If we can seize the facts
 Taught in her life and acts,
 If we can find the path of life she trod,
 Companioned still by God,
 Whose effluence clothes the sod,
 And so elates the soul that naught distracts.

If we can find the golden thread that went
 Through all her life until its force was spent,
 Can follow where it leads
 With equal force, and deeds
 Marshalled to reach the highest peaks of all,
 Then at the final call,
 Whatever fate befall
 We will have sown the earth with wholesome seeds.

Let us remember in the times to be
 How her staid purpose fostered amity ;
 And how, not heeding praise
 Or blame, in perilous days
 She strove to keep our ancient freedom whole,
 Nor failed in self-control
 When oft the distant goal
 Shone, hardly seen, through life's obscuring haze.

And may the memory raise us in the scale
 Of nations, till we reach that point of good
 Where her life's impulse gathers to a flood,
 On whose deep silence every little sail
 Goes on secure, however rent and frail,
 Unto those shores where never hint of blood
 Darkens the grass, and where no slanderous tale
 Frets through the bonds of human brotherhood ;
 May we, remembering her intrepid heart,
 And quiet force against disastrous days,
 Never lose courage, nor desert our part,
 But holding her example in our gaze,
 Follow the path she found upon life's chart,
 And firmly plant our feet in holy ways.

HYMN TO THE ODE

God of our fathers ! at this time
Give us a moment's breath sublime ;
Let all our souls be washed as clean
As spaces of ethereal sheen ;
We pray Thee give us light to see
A glimpse of life's divinity.

God of the nations ! Whose decree
Hath set our sovereign's spirit free,
Let no dividing spite of creed
Disturb the harmony we need.
We pray Thee give us light to see
A glimpse of life's divinity.

Let no contentions interfere
To make our sorrow less austere ;
O ! may each mourning heart forget
Its other ways to chafe and fret.
We pray Thee give us light to see
A glimpse of life's divinity.

From north to south, and east to west,
To-day the drooping banners drest,
Show all the world in anguish bent
And bowed beneath Thy firmament.
We pray Thee give us light to see
A glimpse of life's divinity.

When on the glooming slope of death
We yield at last our feeble breath,
May we, because our queen was great,
Undaunted meet the will of fate,
And find in heaven the light to see
The whole of life's divinity.

QUATRAINS

CLOSE not thy lids on idle dreams,
O voyaging soul aghast !
Safe through the mazes of life's streams
No dreamer ever passed.

Who fails in his allotted march
To make one step for right,
Spoils the wide curve of heaven's arch,
And mars the infinite.

The soul that dies by flesh o'erwon
Is like some tender growth
On which a sated adder coils
And kills in folds of sloth.

What is near us hath no beauty ;
What is most remote,
That we strain to make our duty,
On the vague we dote.

Honour is like a polished shield,
And truth a diamond bright,
But love is like a thought of God
That speeds on wings of light.

Eagles mount on easy wing,
Larks are light of feather,
Man, the heavy-footed thing,
Adds stars and sun together.

The peaks that pierce the deepest blue,
Though lofty, free and still,
Shine with no light of quickening dew,
Like lowly vale and hill.

Beauty born of winds and suns,
Lithe strength of storms and showers,
She gathered nature's graces once
Who sleeps beneath the flowers.

Roses from polluted soil
Draw delicious odours forth,
So doth virtue's secret toil
Sweeten noisome dens of earth.

Faith holds, and love ; round faith
Doubt folds his wings ;
And love, pursued by death,
Dreams fearful things.

Time passes, days and hours,
And months and years ;
For some begemmed with flowers,
For most with tears.

O ! men, is it love ye seek,
 Or something worse ?
 Some thing we may not speak,
 Or name in verse ?

What may a man do more
 Than find his soul,
 And in her holier light
 Seek the far goal ?

Lord ! to that holier self,
 Whose hands hold Thine,
 Give strength to endure, resist,
 And grow divine.

What God remembers cannot die ;
 What He forgets is dead at once,
 And shall not live though all we cry,
 Invoking winds and rains and suns.

When the dawn is in the sky,
 And the east begins to glow,
 Then I hear an angel cry,
 " Lord ! to-day forget their woe."

How weak, O Lord, Thou knowest,
 How weak we are ;
 In grime we seek the lowest,
 And miss the star.

Flourish, O lovely pansies !
 Lift up your velvet faces !
 Round you she weaves her fancies,
 In you I see her graces.

The flower that on the arid rock
 Shows all her rich attire,
 Is like the face that smiles to mock
 Fate's closing ring of fire.

O ! lay me naked in the earth,
 That I may pass
 More cleanly to assist the birth
 Of flower and grass.

Othello looked for purity and touched
 (So in his mind the poison worked apace)
 The white, sweet skin he deemed so foully smutched,
 And shrank aghast from an assigned disgrace.

The rage of mobs is like a fire in grass,
 That flames and roars along a stream of wind,
 For when the furious passions sink and pass
 Only a waste of ashes lies behind.

Beyond these limits there are gods,
 And higher still,
 Dispensing favours, or with rods
 Chastising ill.

Stars in the west are setting,
Those in the east will rise ;
Therefore, O ! weary pilgrim,
Wait on the eastern skies.

MAÍRIN

Ah, thou art dead ; gone like a faded mist
That leaves the flowered valleys all unveiled,
And slips into the bosom of the sky.
Thy hand is colder than a frozen clod.
I touch it, and my very heart is stilled,
And hangs suspended like a purple vase
In a red-arrased chamber, void of fire,
A dull and bloomless thing of barren wastes,
Or lovely fruit the canker frets within.
My blood is like a runnel caught and checked
In the mid grip of winter ; yet I live,
My eyes see still ; my cabined spirit feels,
And in the deep recesses of my being,
Where death may never come for all his power,
Glows a clear flame that cannot be destroyed,
A flame whose light, when it hath left this clay,
Will shine in other regions, whither haste
Innumerable souls on viewless feet,
That may no more be busy with the world
And its gross work. Dead as this mossy stone
Whereon thy head is pillowed ; not a spark
Now left in this soft house of pallid flesh
To open rosy avenues for thought
Of love and beauty, and delight, and peace,
And quiet years of service for the world.

Here, whence the music of a singing soul
Was wont to issue, till enchanted ears
Forgot all other sounds, a seal is set
That no magician with compelling art
May loose or break. These fingers stark and thin
That cling like icicles about the grass,
And chill the very roots that grow beneath,
Will in the fruitless years that gloom ahead,
Lie listless in the dust of vanished dreams,
Weaving no more with dexterous delight,
Mantles of rosy wonder for the world.
These limbs, whose agile sinews never tired,
But with the winds along the dizzy crags
Played and were glad, and when the morning woke
To stare down darkness with his royal gaze,
Went forth to gather from the fields and hills
The garnered glories of their radiant souls,
Are now for ever helpless, cramped and starved
Of those warm streams that fed them as with fire,
And over them a mould begins to creep,
As o'er the marble limbs of some young god,
Creeps the dull dusty issue of the years.
These eyes that were the ministers of light,
And saw behind the veils of flesh and sense,
Where cloudy hosts of waiting angels stand,
Like leagues of lilies in a lifting light,
Are closed ; and those bright crystals they employed
To flash a thousand merry glints of life,

And catch the under-gleam of budding things,
 And the great glooms and glories of the world,
 Are dead and lightless as a diamond is
 Whereon some poisonous mouth hath breathed a
 mist

Of its thick dew. This form that's here destroyed
 Was full of lissom motion, and could dart
 With courier speed amid the sparkling stars,
 A thing of fiery joy, that in the light
 Of the wide noon was like an eagle poised,
 And in the cloudy regions of the sky,
 Wandered through blushing Edens like a child.
 Now it is like a lily stricken down
 And wilting in the sun, that cannot feel
 The gentlest fanning touches of the air,
 And though a million odorous flowers would dance
 Around it here, and breathe against its face,
 Such poppy juice hath lagged along its veins,
 It would not stir a limb, or lift a lash,
 But lie as cold and dreamless as a rock
 In some frore vale of the exhausted moon.

O love, of young and unremorseful hours,
 Thy presence stayed, uplifted, and indued
 My heart with exultations and delights,
 Till all about me, with enraptured eyes,
 I saw the radiant beauty of the earth,
 And caught, in moments of intensest joy,
 Quick flashes, like the sparkles on a sea

When windless light enrobes the waking world,
 Of the divine effulgence, everywhere
 Breaking into the light of common day—
 Saw how the soundless harmonies evolved
 From the deep springs of being, without pause
 Filling the earth, and all the restless seas
 With multitudinous life. Thy lifted hands
 Beckoned my feet towards the purple heights,
 Seen then above me in the aerial dome,
 But now, alas, forever hid from view
 By the grey mists that shroud me in from light.

Sweet love of wholesome days, and clean cool
 nights,

Thy spirit was a guide to lead me on
 When the unclouded amplitudes were mine,
 And every field and shaggy headland gave
 Assurances of peace, and thrilled my soul
 With glad pulsations of delirious life,—
 When all the visible world, from pole to pole,
 Small or stupendous, breathing or inert,
 Was garmented with glory,—when I drew
 Deep draughts of incommunicable joy
 From every change of the delicious hours,—
 When, far away beneath a silver cloud,
 A filmy light of sunset draped the earth,
 Till the green hills, and their descending vales,
 And all the budding kopjes peeping forth,
 Glowed with the magic beauty of a dream,

And such glad stir of blood along my veins
 Wrought me to passion, seeing there enveiled
 A loveliness too exquisite for words,—
 So far removed from man's familiar thoughts,
 He could not, though he strove with ceaseless
 care,

And used the skill of Orpheus in his song,
 Weave in a net of his considered verse,
 One tenuous thread of that ethereal robe,
 Thou led'st me forth when little breezes woke,
 And moved the sultry vestures of the night
 With a slow cooling ripple, and a mist
 Came fleecing up along the wooded kloofs,
 Fuming in noiseless swirls about the trees,
 And filling every emerald-hearted cup,
 And all the moonlit hollows, and damp vleis,
 And the green river reaches, to the brim
 With intervolving billows, that the moon
 Silvered to soothing beauty. Drawn by thee
 I climbed a rugged range of towering heights,
 Whose bossy shoulders, pushing through the stars,
 Showed like the prows of some tremendous fleet
 That slowly sailing up a waveless sea,
 Breaks all the lazy water into light,
 And whose bald heads of iron tempered rock,
 Obscurely looming through a veil of cloud,
 O'erlooked the round green dunes of rolling grass,
 Silent and cold ; while down their broken sides,

Through lightless chasms, and sombre centred
glooms,

Ran the clear laughter of a hundred streams,
With silver chatter dancing on their way,
And sending up from all their glimmering threads
A murmur of innumerable notes,
As if from out some secret vale of dreams
Should float a chorus of impulsive joy
From creatures that have felt the touch of spring,
And sing for rapture in the seeding grass.

With thee I climbed the mountains of the east,
From whence I looked, as one may look in dreams,
And saw the future budding from the past ;
Faint as a moon behind a pearly veil
It bloomed at first, and then its petals grew,
And rayed themselves into the universe,
Striking the stars with glory, and the earth
With inconceivable swift fires of life,
That vanished into seeds, and roots and veins
With vivifying force, to be again
Rewoven into vernal garniture,
And tossed about with clouds and streaming mists,
When these replenish nature's arteries,
And stanch the drouth of many burning weeks.

Together we were happy in the dark,
And saw beneath the velvet clinging robes,
And silver fringes of unfolding night,
The smooth and oily levels of the sea,

Listlessly calm, for now the breeze was low,
 And like a whisper out of dying lips,
 Murmured a soft farewell to all the world,
 And, soundless as a fading cloud of light,
 Slipped into silence past the farthest cape,
 Leaving a holy calm on all the air,
 And on the sea, and on the gathered mist,
 The mountains, and the liberal leagues of grass,
 And throughout all the teeming amplitudes,—
 A calm that seemed to hold all living things,
 And even the sparkling laughter of the streams,
 In one long pause of pulseless ecstasy.

Thy light was like a sacerdotal robe
 Drawn close about me, thrild with thrilling heats ;
 And when disastrous hours came, and beat
 With ruthless strokes, and unconsidered rage
 Many to earth for ever, and broke down
 Deep laid defences in their mad career,
 I blanched not, nor retreated from the path,
 For still above me in the ravening heavens,
 I saw the frolic twinkle of thy star,
 That peeped above the ruin of the wind,
 And kept my purpose valid through the stress.

Without thee we are only witless fools
 That wander through a world of shattered lights,
 Blind and decrepit, grovelling, meagre, weak,
 Hither and thither nosing in the dust,
 Like hounds at fault upon a doubtful trail.

Absorbed in sorrow we can only hear
Sobbed voices from the under world of grief,
That moan about the sad and lonely hills
When the grass sickens and the earth is cold.
We press into the sweating marts to find
Each weary day more weary than the last,
Until the bitterest weariness of all,
The weariness that wearies of itself,
Smothers the final spark, and we despair.

GOD AND MAN

Lo, God is as a child
If man will only bend
To kiss His lips that smiled
At thought of him as friend,
Who is of good beguiled,
And careless of his end.

For man is high and proud,
And walks with head uplift,
Is hardly overbowed
By powers he cannot sift,
And recks not of the shroud
To which he soon must shift.

He only sees to-day
The compass of his wants,
Is mean enough to pray
What time his bosom pants
With fear and wild dismay
That God will spoil his vaunts.

The spirit that abides
In all these common things,
That moves the cleansing tides,
And in all music sings,
The budding rose divides
To bloom in scented rings,

That holds the balance true
Between the rolling spheres,
Makes spring to show her hue,
And marshals all the years,
Crowns life from death anew,
And smiles behind our tears,—

This spirit unto man
Is but a careless thought,
A something whence he can,
When sorely overwrought,
Draw force of hope to span
A bridge to heaven's court ;

No more ; man's prideful glance
Sweeps all the starry ways ;
His scornful countenance
Upon no pity stays ;
He stakes his soul with chance,
And for her favour plays.

RONDEL

MANY loves and wild desires
 Kill at last the soul of love,
 Death so compassed soon shall prove
 All is lost that so expires,

Burn the heart in one love's fires,
 Let it not for others move ;
 Many loves and wild desires
 Kill at last the soul of love.

He that looks and quickly tires,
 He that lingers but to rove,
 Rends the net of iron wires
 Caging passion's lawless drove ;
 Many loves and wild desires
 Kill at last the soul of love.

LET ME BE CLEAN

LET me be clean
In thought for aye,
Let nought bemean
My living-way ;
Even in my dreams
Let me be pure
As mountain streams
Whose limpid gleams
No silts obscure.

Let me be white
As lilies are,
Steadfast in light
As yonder star ;
And let no deed
Of mine destroy
The smallest seed
Whose growth would feed
A shred of joy.

That so at last
When dreams are done,
And life has passed
Beyond the sun,

I may have left
A clearer way
To feet bereft
Of strength, and deft
Only to stray.

SONG

THE hills are dark, the narrow path is steep,
No light above, and here a rugged way ;
Let me lie down, Ah, God ! a little sleep
Would ease the weary day.

A little rest in silence and content,
And dreamless as the slumber of the sea,
Would stay my soul or ere the light be spent
And time grows dark for me.

The broken dreams of men are all around,
Scattered like roses in a rain of fire,
Shards of their hopes encumber all the ground
Whose hands have dropt the lyre.

Darkness above me in the clouded arch,
And here a cold and cheerless prospect chills,
Yet after rest let me not cease to march
Towards the purple hills.

SONG

A BREEZE that was full of music
Came over the drooping wheat,
And it rose, and fell, and faltered,
And sank away in the heat.

All day like a bird o'erwearied,
In a bower of gracious shade
It folded its silver pinions
And dreamed of its mountain glade.

Though the burning hours assailed it,
Safe hid in its secret nest
It lay like a maiden's passion
Asleep in her sinless breast.

And lo ! when the fierce light faded,
And the soundless shadows grew,
It woke from its sleep and fluttered
Away to its vale of dew.

SONG

SWEET as your thoughts are in their nest,
The cosy confines of your breast,
So sweet the words are that you use
To give those thoughts to me as news.

Pure as your soul is where it lies
In those coy depths that are your eyes,
So are the looks which you employ
To send me records of its joy.

Soft as the light upon your face
Of incommunicable grace,
So is the influence round you drawn
From silvery night and rosy dawn.

Bright as the dewdrops on the grass,
That sparkle while great planets pass,
So in its crystal purity
Shines all your spirit out to me.

SONG

Solomon *se repent*—"Comfort me with apples, for
I am sick of love."

TAKE away the apples !
Love is still my comfort,
Love that like the morning
Fills the sky with roses ;

Love that like the noonday
Floods the earth with glory,
Light, and warmth, and beauty,
And superb desires ;

Love that when the evening
Draws her velvet curtains,
Brings a fragrant message
From the closing flowers,

And when stars are filling
All the windless heavens,
Feels a deeper longing
Than the lips can utter.

Love is still my comfort—
Fields are green and gracious,
And the world for ever
Now is full of music.

SONG

WERE they twin stars that beamed
Softly out of the night ?
Down through the weeping heavens
Shone their ineffable light.

Was it her face I saw,
There where the starlight beamed,
Or was it the thought of my soul
That slept in its sorrow and dreamed ?

Was it her voice I heard
Whispering faint and low,
Was it her voice, or my heart
Breaking to ease its woe ?

Her face, and her eyes and voice,
I see and hear in my sleep,
And the soundless ocean of pain
Grows dark, and lonely and deep.

SONG

BLUE skies that have no cloud,
Where no winds blow,
Green hills without a shroud
Or crown of snow,
Lush vales where the lily pales
With all delight,
Low river banks with ranks
Of flowers alight—
These are the dreams we have
When first love makes us brave.

Rich gardens where the rose
Blooms and is sweet,
Where tender things repose
Nor fear the heat,
Fair days that are loud with praise
Of wordless glee,
And foamless seas the breeze
Moves amorously—
These are the dreams we have
When first love makes us brave.

All sweet things that have had
Their dream of love,
All that with beauty clad
Rejoice to move

With these through the magic trees
That shade the path,
Where strong love lives and gives
All that he hath—
These are the dreams we have
When first love makes us brave.

SONG

Kiss the tender petalled rose
Till thy heart is pure as fire,
Purged of life's disturbing woes,
Pulsing only to aspire,

Kiss the poppy's dreamy face
Till thine eyelids droop and close,
So forgetting all disgrace,
Thou shalt win a dead repose.

Kiss the poppy, kiss the rose ;
One will bathe thy soul in light,
Round thy life the other throws
Shadows of an endless night.

SONG

WHY now,
Since all is said and done,
Since life, so long begun,
Was wrongly started ?

Why should we meet to-day,
When all I think or say,
When all I hope or pray
Is sorrow-hearted ?

Ah ! long,
Long shall I live to know
All the embittered woe
Of love deserted.

Yet now,
Since we have met so late,
I cannot mend my state,
Still let me smile at fate,
Though broken-hearted.

SONG

WHEN I am dead, I wonder
If from her golden eyes
A silver teardrop will descend
For wistful memories ?
Or will no shadow darken
Across them when she hears
That I am gone for ever
Where hearts forget their fears ?

Whether she weep, or laughter
Light up her golden eyes,
Will matter then but little
When I am done with sighs.
But now to know her feeling
May flood my soul with light,
And give me strength serenely
To pass into the night.

SONG

LET thy sorrow lie
In the heart's hot core,
Where none may hear it sigh
However smarts the sore,
And when thy lips would cry,
Shut close the pallid door.

Hide thy sorrow well
From all the vulgar crowd,
Silence it with the spell
Of seeming joy ; be proud
When death's unpitying knell
Reminds thee of a shroud.

Let no moonbeams catch
In thee a glimpse of pain ;
Hide it where none may watch
How it doth bleed in vain,
How all its pulses match
The fever in thy brain.

SONG

O ! WERE I first a rosy wreath
Upon her brow to rest,
She'd feel the tremor of my love
Stir in her maiden breast.

And were I next a violet
Breathing against her side,
The fragrance of my vestal love
Would through her spirit glide.

CONTRAST

BROWSING cattle, sleek and clean,
Stand in waves of seeded grass,
Each in calm, unstudied mien,
Careless of what comes to pass.

But we fret against the cords
Drawn by fate around our feet,
Fume with blast of idle words,
Weak as cowards in defeat.

HYMN

THE music of the worlds of light
We hear more clearly than of old,
The wonders of the cosmic night
Man's spirit travails to unfold.

The deeps that seemed beyond our ken,
Where triple darkness held her sway,
Show now a blush of dawn to men,
And slowly brighten into day.

From where the stars their courses hold
Harmonious intuitions flow,
And through the mists obscure and cold
Shines now the surely quickening glow,

A glow that flashes into fire,
A stream of light serene and strong,
Wherein our souls shall lose desire
For selfish aims that lead to wrong.

Through clearer skies the heights are seen,
The darkness trembles into dawn,
And o'er the heavenly ramparts lean
Familiar faces long withdrawn.

We feel them near us in our pain,
Their joys increase because of ours,
And when our final sins are slain
We too shall wield their ampler powers.

DROUGHT IN SPRING

No tree can flower, the fierce skies shower
A rain of scorching rays ;
The haggard hills are stark and red,
And in the streamless valley bed
 The burnished boulders blaze.

There is no bloom upon the pear,
No blossom on the peach,
The young leaves of the apple trees
Are shrivelled, dry and sere ;
No glint of green is on the grass,
And through each choking mountain pass
 Dry windy torrents screech.

Dry winds that sweep like blasts of flame
From where the restless fires
Leap from the sand of a barren land,
And rush, and roar, and for evermore
With pitiless ravage southward pour,
Licking the earth till her nascent mirth,
And all her fervour of young desires
Sink, and fade, and are blown to dust,
And all the beauty she dreamed and planned,
And all the seeds of the season's lust
 Perish or ever they come to birth.

Each tender thing that dreamed of Spring
And her redeeming breath,
Is palsied in its velvet sheath
By winds that lift and swing
Huge dusty columns up and round,
Until they reach the hazy bound
Where sky, and dust and leprous ground
Mingle like visions in a swoond
 When life sweats out in the throes of death.

Only the hardy aloes grow
Along the mountain breast
Each scarlet bloom is like a plume
Above a warrior's crest,
And on the barren slopes they stand
Like trusty guards at rest ;
And here and there
In the blinding glare
A gaping crevice lifts
The plump leaves of the prickly pear
That loves the desert drifts,
And stands supreme where the black rocks gleam
In the broken boulder rifts.
The glassy glint of the naked flint,
And the sheen of the armed blades,
Shed the soulless light of a grinning spite
On the ridge of the treeless shades.

The sky is dim with dust, and red
 The turgid furnace throbs
 Above a world as dry and dead,
 And dewless as a desert bed,
 Where all day long the hot wind sobs,
 Or sighs, and whispers low in dread,
 As if its soul, with horror fed,
 Before a host of demons fled,
 Like one on whom disasters shed
 Long years of failure's agonies.

No cloud is in the burning cope,
 No little cloud with spotless shroud
 May there for fear abide ;
 She feels the beat of the ruthless heat,
 And melts like snow from a sunward slope,
 Or the joy of a leper's bride.

No bird note trills in the lonely hills,
 Where only the winds are loud,
 And all night through no jewel of dew
 Slips out of a sleeping cloud.

Through the fierce hot hours
 With wasting powers,
 The starving creatures roam,
 With parched throats, and lips adust,

With eyes o'erfilmed and dull,
 And gaunt ribbed sides, whose hairless hides
 Are cracked and scurfed like the peel of rust
 That covers a weathered hull,
 They search with listless feet, nor find .
 In all the veld one luscious rind
 Of melon to appease the drouth
 That burns in every gaping mouth,
 And drags, and eats at the milkless teats
 Of the cow, and the ewe and the staggering mare,
 Whose young's thin voice is the piteous noise
 That grizzles the farmer's hair.

And like a corse a haggard horse
 Crawls to the slimy pool,
 So ashy-grey he looks as may a wan and wasted
 ghoul,
 A thing wherein some nameless sin
 Hath crushed the spirit's rule.
 High in wide wastes of withering air
 The waiting vultures fly,
 Or swoop in rings on hissing wings
 To where sick creatures lie ;
 And sideways down with avid stare
 They watch the filming eyes ;
 Then beak in flesh whose quivering mesh
 Attests its agonies.

Dead in its bed the river is ;
The fountain flows no more ;
The vlei is dry, and green bones lie
Where grass was green before,
And sickly smells come from the wells
Where all was sweet of yore.

ODE FOR PEACE

I FELT a hand that touched me in the night,
 And with strange ardour urged me to depart
 Out of myself into a wider light,
 And sweeter regions, where no evil smart
 Of passion should my being interfuse,
 And where no bloody dew
 Of slaughter should begrime the patient earth,
 Where is no anger to becloud the Muse,
 Nor any fearful sights to banish mirth ;
 Where halcyon days and undisturbed nights,
 Assuring calm delights,
 Help men to grow in mental stature strong,
 And where the soul for ever feels a sense
 Of her essential goodly innocence,
 That is increased the more she scorneth wrong ;
 Where every fervent moment glows with thought
 Out of pure feeling wrought,
 And each unto the other closely moves
 With hands of service and a heart that loves.

And soon I found me at the ivory gate
 Through which somewhiles the soul will take her
 way,
 Leaving the empty body like a weight
 Discarded when the purpose fears delay ;

And from the sapphire windows I beheld,
Standing where mists dispelled,
Before a mellow, intempestuous light,
That like a soundless fountain softly welled
Out of the spangled regions of the night,
An angel with imperishable eyes,
And pure glad charities
Fondling about her tender smiling lips,
And in her look the wonder of a dream,
Full, warm, and soft as is that rosy gleam
That like a virgin blush at morning slips
Over the silver glory of the stars,
Or throws out filmy bars,
That rib the orient windows of the day,
Whose golden banners flash in brave array.

Her luring eyes entreated all my soul
To journey with her through the crisping air ;
Wherefore I left the check and dull control
Of limb and brain, and up a silver stair,
Made by pure star-beams slanting down to earth,
Went with her gladly forth
Towards a stately mountain in the East
Set high to catch the day's first throb of birth,
While in the lower land no bird or beast
Feels the cool touch of dawn upon its face,
Nor stirreth in its place ;
And soon we reached the highest purple crest,

Whereon alighting, all the world beneath
 Lay in a slumbrous ease of rhythmic breath,
 And all the murmur of its folded rest
 Fluttered the balmy pulses of the breeze ;
 But she, not heeding these,
 Said, " Here I leave thee ; hence thou mayst behold
 The dubious past, and what the ages hold."

In dim, warm pools of water I beheld
 Where the soft mud lay black in steaming heat,
 As if some tiny specks of matter swelled,
 Moved out an arm, or made a leg retreat ;
 Bloodless and boneless points of life, whose sense
 Insphered omnipotence,
 To keep such formless substance in control,
 And guide its slow development from thence
 Up the long avenues to conscious soul.
 I saw the young world spinning through a sweat
 Of vapour, bare and wet,
 And all along its hills and valleys flew
 Quivers of life ; like sun-starts on a lake
 Innumerable shoots and buds outbrake,
 And the first spring her gaudy mantle drew
 Over the naked earth ; and while I gazed
 A sudden glory blazed
 Up from the ground ; and splendours of great flowers
 Flashed into life beneath the ceaseless showers.

Thick mists began to roll about the world,
 And hot rains hissed against the fervid rocks ;
 Clouds, interlaced with running fires, unfurled
 Their humid banners to the thunder-shocks,
 And trailed in shreds across the darkened heaven ;
 Wide rents broke through the levin,
 And from the seething mud whose murky steam
 Rose slowly with the wind, sheer up was driven
 Above the unstable hills a turbid stream
 That in great splashes fell to earth again ;
 And in that fouling rain
 Gigantic creatures of the primal days,
 Lurched, dimly seen, about the reedy fens,
 Or sprawled uncouth beside their noisome dens,
 Shapeless as terror when a dream betrays
 The soul unto a desert's viewless dread ;
 Upon the slimy bed
 Of lake, and sea, and river monstrous forms
 Grovelled in knots like intervolving worms.

These were the wakened spirit's great essays—
 Hummocks of flesh of rude unwieldy shape,
 That oared about the tepid water-ways,
 Or crawled through slime around some misty cape ;
 Exhaled their poisonous breath against the moon
 Until she seemed to swoon,
 Or flew in swarms across the stormy day
 Adding a darkness to the sombre noon ;

And all about the oozy islands lay,
 Half-buried in a viscid slush of spawn,
 Whence momentarily were born
 Innumerable progeny, distorted bulks
 That when they moved about the sluggish lakes,
 Or crept for ambush into dusky brakes,
 Seemed liker hills, or slowly heaving hulks
 Of derelicts upon some sleepy main,
 Than things of living grain :
 And the young earth beneath her hideous brood
 Felt the fierce joys of her strange motherhood.

But with a ceaseless impulse to inspire
 Divine ambitions in the beast and flower
 The spirit bowed through aeons dark and dire,
 Fretted and foiled by some oppugnant power,
 Yet ever moulding matter to its will ;
 With strong insistent skill,
 Laboured through all the labyrinthine ways,
 Cunningly bent her purpose to fulfil,
 And faltered not, though all the nights and days
 Opposed her with destruction : she refined
 The chambers of the mind,
 From age to age advancing, till she made
 The brain by slow accretions larger lobed,
 And ever in more brilliant beauty robed
 All the small creatures of the sun and shade,
 Dowered the earth with loveliness supreme,

And flashed the heavenly gleam,
 And moving in the secret cells of things
 Woke life to feel the pulses of the springs.

Up from the deep the generations came,
 Sore travailing to win a little way,
 Faltered perchance as might a beaten flame
 Checked by the wind upon a gusty day ;
 But with divine deliberation fraught
 Obeyed the hidden thought,
 Unfolding countless images thereof
 To show the gains of what the Spirit sought ;
 Yea, as their robes of flesh the creatures doff,
 The fluctuant fires of their living light,
 In busy death's despite,
 Quicken the blood to nourish other thews
 That likewise run their little course, and draw,
 Through quenchless yearnings for the higher law,
 Strength to employ and garner all their dues
 For greater uses in a future birth,
 That so increasing worth
 May raise all life into the light that streams
 Out of the starry regions of God's dreams.

Lo ! out of death must come a brighter birth,
 Else were the fruitful issues of the years
 No better than the arid growths of dearth ;
 Out of the night, whose dews are only tears.

Must bud the flaming roses of the dawn,
 Whose petals, newly born,
 Advance their cooling shadows o'er the world
 Till in the splendour of full light they're torn
 And shredded into vermeil mists, enfurled
 About the capes and mountains of the sky ;
 Yea, all sweet things that die
 Must be the cause for sweeter things to live ;
 Out of corruption's charnel-odoured soil,
 Must spring the harvest of the Spirit's toil,
 And though all lives are swiftly fugitive,
 Behind cold death creative power endures,
 Working all mystic cures ;
 And far withdrawn into the boundless deeps
 The Eternal Sower smiles on what he reaps.

As yet unto this moment all is dark,
 Not chaos, but the comprehension lacks
 To find a warrant for the living spark,
 Or trace an order in these dubious tracks
 That cross, and stop, and turn, and disappear
 As if in aimless fear,
 Tremblingly eager to escape a doom
 Whose instant stroke is fatal ; everywhere
 Destruction meets the creatures in their gloom ;
 Through ceaseless prodigality of waste
 The generations haste ;
 Seeming confusion in the method hides

The great proemion's prophecy of good
 To come, and all along a trail of blood
 The beast procession moves, halts, and subsides
 Like a spent wave into the trough o' the sea,
 To rise again and be
 Crested with sparkling life, that as before
 Will flash and run its bubbles up the shore.

Now Man appears ; I see him slowly change
 From form to form, and each of finer grain,
 Beast-like at first and lower ; since his range
 Is ampler on the curves of joy and pain,
 It needs must be his loose defenceless mind
 Will shift with every wind,
 And young invention's frolic fits of play,
 Or blood-inspired orgies will not find
 A let to break their fury, or delay
 The intemperate issues of a sudden brawl ;
 But though he limp and fall,
 And haunt for ages all the gory slopes
 That drain their wetted sides into a sea
 Fulfilled long since of human agony,
 He must advance who looks before and hopes ;
 And since he gathers wisdom out of fears,
 Finds reason for his tears,
 And preens the wings that falter, he must rise
 To gauge the depths of nature's mysteries.

The apex of the pyramid of life
 He crowns, yet savage blood leaps in his veins,
 And his best dreams are still of war and strife
 And carnage ; and the sweat of battle drains
 Out of his limbs, with dust and clammy dew
 Mixed to a viscid ooze ;
 And passions seize him in their fiery grip,
 Dragging him down in spite of iron thews,
 For muscle only serves to wield the whip.
 More subtle strength must vivify the soul
 To break the close control
 Of flesh upon her swift ethereal wings,
 Though check to muscle also is a means
 To make her chafe until impatience preens
 Her feathers for escape ; propitious springs
 Gladden the earth with light of dancing flowers,
 And so the spirit's powers,
 In the right season of their secret growth,
 Waken the flesh from its corrupting sloth.

Stronger his vision grows with Time's advance—
 The inner vision of the deeper soul,
 That shows him all the gardens of romance,
 With knights and ladies taking happy toll
 Of life, where all vicissitudes combine
 To polish and refine,
 What else would crawl along in muddy grooves,
 And so continue in a base decline,

Back to the beast that lacks the higher loves,
 The beast whose dreams run down a sanguine trail
 Where all bright visions fail :—
 That shows him the clear heights of science, crisp
 And cool, and frosty as a winter sky
 When all the stars are shining far and dry
 Through air undimmed by any faintest wisp
 Of cloud, and when no moonbeam's silver sheen
 Sheds glamour on the scene ;
 Vision from brighter vision drawing light
 To lead him out whose eyes are sealed with night.

And more, since man in sudden glimpses, sees
 Under the languid eyelids of a dream,—
 That stirs his thought, as by a little breeze
 The fragrant fields are stirred until they gleam
 With shaken sheen of jewels in the light,—
 The ever wondrous sight,
 That in a moment guides his weary feet,
 Into the calmest regions of delight ;
 Where flowery glades and grassy meadows sweet,
 And waters flowing, or at peaceful rest,
 Do all the place invest
 With beauty, and with easeful deep content,
 Under the golden quiet of the hours,
 That are as balmy as when summer showers
 Wash and make cool the day's soft azure, blent
 With floating veils of pearly lustred mist,

Whose billows fold and twist,
 And loop, and curl, and tumble like a sea,
 Till into light they soar and cease to be.

Around him is the flash of viewless light
 That none may see save only with the eye
 Of inward sense ; from some ethereal height,
 Set where no lidded vision may descry
 That or aught else, a glory falls and glows
 In all the hearts of those
 Whose spirits for the moment are serene,
 Uplifted, and forgetful of the woes
 That swell the music of the mortal throne.
 Instants of wonder, momentary glints
 Of light that are the prints
 Of feet whose mercies thrud the singing spheres,
 He hath and sees, and his whole being leaps
 Into a flame of joy whose rapture keeps
 His mood above the ravage of the years.
 Quick intuitions from the source of things
 Come on their soundless wings,
 And hover round him till the air is sweet
 With the shed perfume of their secret beat.

Ever he moves towards the effluent light,
 The imponderable splendour that o'ersweeps
 The universe, and in its soundless might
 Illimitably shivers, flows, and leaps

Through endless time, on ceaseless labour bent
 To reach divine content,
 Imperishable beauty, and desire
 Refined to burn like purest flames, unblent
 With aught that feeds the wick of carnal fire.
 From the white fields of heaven unto him
 Descend the cherubim ;
 Immaculate thoughts like flowers in their hands
 They bear, and in the shrine of his frail heart
 Kindle young hopes that will not thence depart
 For ever, but increase as light expands
 Under the cope of dawn when not a speck
 Of cloud is there to fleck
 The soft, still radiance of the budding hours
 That slowly quicken into day's hot flowers.

And having reached these high, white lands of
 rapture,
 Whose frontiers shine with angels holding guard,
 Shall man not use his energies to capture
 Remoter peaks with peace for his reward ?
 Peace the strong-eyed, the steadfast, the divine,
 Whose feet will not decline
 Into hot ways of passion, nor be drawn
 Where reeks the musty odour of stale wine,
 And ribald voices greet the murky dawn—
 Peace whose white hands with plenty overflow,
 Whose crystal heart will show

Immense compassion for such drooping eyes
As the world scorns for poverty ; she fills
All ways with beauty, and her work distils
Rich balms of comfort ; she is staid and wise
In all her counsels, just and temperate,
And without spite or hate
In her great soul, and where she reigns supreme
Falls the pure light of God's supernal dream.

She doth not flash a sword to wound the world,
Nor build leviathans to rule the sea,
And shake the sunless deeps with thunder, hurled
Out of the vicious throats of enmity,
When nations rage against each other's coasts.
She hath no glittering hosts,
Whose office is destruction, to command ;
And when the victor in a quarrel boasts
Of all the slain, and how the conquered land
Is but a ruin, she with weeping eyes
Recalls their miseries
On whom the wanton ravage of their kind
Fell like a fire ; she yearns for blowing fields
Yellow with corn that double measure yields,
Green waves of grass beneath a taintless wind
Opulent hills with kine and sheep o'errun,
And the good heat o' the sun
Helped to achieve its purpose ; only then
Is she enamoured of the works of men.

She loves the jewels on the morning grass,
 And the pure winds that fan the iron hills
 Enrapture all her being as they pass
 Laden with balm to ease the languid ills
 That linger in the valleys; leagues of land,
 Tamed to the ploughman's hand,
 And shining, newly-turned, to greet the days
 With favourable promise to withstand
 Assaults of famine, these receive her praise,
 And thrill her bosom with delicious pleasure
 In rich, unstinted measure ;
 And all the quiet fruitage of the years,
 Gathered when no alarms disturb the hours,
 And garnered without let of wasting powers,
 Enthrall her careful thought ; she hath no fears,
 Save when the angry trumpets wake the night,
 With sudden fierce affright,
 And all day long the sated vultures sweep
 On hissing wings above the carrion heap

In her deep soul is no intemperate heat
 Of patriotic ardour to destroy
 The source of justice, and retard the beat,
 Set to the music of all human joy,
 Of her strong heart ; her passionate desire
 Is to see man aspire
 Above the narrow circle of his kin,
 Outsoar the impulse of his blood, and fire

The world with love's delirium, till he win
 The cooler regions of unfettered soul
 Where flesh resigns control,
 And the pure spirit sheds her radiant light
 With the large richness of a risen star,
 Impartially on all ; her keys unbar
 The doors that give delivery from night,
 And free the myriads who are slaves indeed
 To wealth's insensate greed.
 She smiles, and all the earth with joy responds
 And man forgets the torture of his bonds.

Her brood of men delve into all the springs
 Of Nature, and lead out the silver stream
 Over the arid earth, till wisdom brings
 A sense of higher powers, and the Gleam
 Glows on enchanted faces, while they gaze,
 With eyes in wide amaze,
 To see how comely is the universe
 In this new light, whose quick revealing rays
 Scatter the clouds and make the mists disperse.
 And they who saw not any lovely sights,
 Are since with young delights
 Transported, till the dust upon their shoes
 Shines with divine significance ; the sweat
 Wrung from hot brows, with anxious furrows set,
 Prefigures happy issues ; sorrow's dews
 Will never fall where men in amity,

Consenting to agree,
 Stand closely bound to fight against the evils
 That drag them down to feed the lust of devils.

Glory and loveliness, and calm delights,
 And wide horizons open to the sky,
 And sure reliefs from anguish, and the blights
 That settle on the soul and drain it dry
 Of all its sweet solitudes, will come
 When Peace enfolds the home ;
 And all the lands that raise her snowy flag,
 Woven of lily-tissue, will become
 Strong to advance against the ceaseless drag
 Of custom ; and the stale desire of gain
 Will vanish in the train
 Of many fearful horrors that begrime
 The minds of men ; illusions that destroy
 The hopes that might have blossomed into joy,
 Will disappear like winter's numbing rime
 Before the growing ardour of the Spring :
 Immortal Peace will bring
 Into these broken and distempered years
 A spur to progress, and a balm for tears.

THE GARDEN OF LOVE

I LOOKED where the apples bloomed
In the garden of love ;
And the bees were like specks of gold,
Like beads of gold upon the buds—
Like quivering drops of flame
Falling into the flowers,—
Like humming flecks of fire
They circled about the trees,
And clung to snowy clouds of bloom
Like nets of rubies drawn
Over a maiden's breasts.

And roses I saw, all red
And pink as the waking dawn
When every moment glows
With lovelier tints, until
The orient fields are alight,
Alight with ineffable flowers,
Whose delicate hues recall
The ache, and the joy, and the fear
Of days gone down in a mist,
In a mist of sorrowful tears.

And past the apples, I saw,
In the magical light of a dream,
In a glamour of opaline light,
How the roses drooped and died,
Withered, and fell away
In the ruining breath of love,
The breath that destroyed their hearts
And struck their lips like a flame,
Till their scent was the scent of death,
The odour of faded things.

And lower in the marshy pools,
By still, wan waters I saw
Pale armies of lilies gleam ;
Clouds like doves in a storm
Swayed together and fell,
Opened and drew erect
Their quivering ranks, like foam
With light of gold in its heart ;
And ever the thick warm breath
From the garden of love
Thrilled them with hopes of life,
And froze them with fears of death,
Till every lily sighed
And moaned in the desolate waste,
And their gold and silver was shed,
Like fire and snow together,
On patches of sickly sedge.

And in their midst,
 Far in the midst of their drooping heads,
 On the wet flags,
 In the midst of a feculent fen,
 In the midst of a creeping mist,
 A stealing clinging mist,
 I saw the figure of Love,
 Unhooded, with flaming eyes,
 And a cruel smile on his lips,
 And a bow in his hand of steel,
 That gleamed like a sword as it bent.
 Around him myriads of forms
 Prostrate, with heaving sides,
 Lay close on the steaming earth
 In a windless fog of despair—
 And the shafts from his bow went forth,
 The pitiless shafts of death,
 With indiscriminate aim,
 Piercing to right and left
 The hearts of the children of men
 With the unappeasable fire
 Of love that destroys at last,—
 That burns their bodies to dust,
 And shrivels their souls like grass
 Licked up by a raging flame.

And I looked through the choking mist,
And saw, till my heart grew sick,
That all they lying as dead
Were young, with opulent hair,
And bodies of flower-like grace—
But their faces I could not see,
Being bowed at the feet of the god.

POOR TOM'S ACOLD

GNAW me, winter, in thy rage ;
Bite till every feeling's dead ;
Crush me in thy icy cage ;
Blow thy rime about my head.

Numb my body ; stop my blood ;
Make my members burn with pain ;
Plunge me in a freezing flood ;
Drive thy spears into my brain.

Grip my heart with frigid fingers ;
On my very soul take hold
With thy terrors ; while life lingers
Scourge me thou ; poor Tom's acold.

LAMBS ARE JOCUND IN THE GRASS

LAMBS are jocund in the grass ;
Birds upon the budding trees
Sing, while crystal waters pass
Lisping liquid melodies.

Cows and oxen in the light
Stand as in a dream of peace,
Thinking not of winter's spite,
Nor his hungry miseries.

And the cuckoo, bearing spring
On his green enamelled back,
Makes the bushland echoes ring
In his amorous lady's track.

Rapture, mounting from the earth,
Floods the sky with silver song ;
All the fields are loud with mirth,
Whither youths and maidens throng.

Blood that hardly seemed to move,
Leaps to catch the season's fire,
And the dimpled god of love,
Bends the world to his desire.

DREAMS

THE dreams of youth are borne on wings
That never droop or tire ;
An ancient's dreams are mouldy things
Devoid of fire.

The dreams of youth are like those flowers
That flush the dawn with light ;
An ancient's dreams through dusty hours
Drag down to night.

The dreams of youth are strong and fierce,
And scale the highest crags ;
An ancient's dreams are worms that pierce
The mould of rags.

Around me now the dreams of age
Crowd like the dregs of time,
Blown on the breath of winter's rage,
And white with rime.

HOW COLD IS THE WORLD

How cold is the world when the heart is distressed,
How lightless the sky to a spirit oppressed ;
But the heart when it conquers, the soul when it
 wins
Regains what it lost to a legion of sins.

THE CALL

O FATHER, hear you how the cold wind roars ?
Hear you the clamour of the icy rain
Beating and splashing on the window pane ?
Hear you the rattle of the mouldy doors,
And above all, that eerie wail of pain ?

I hear the cold wind driving on the rocks.
I hear the water pouring from the eaves,
And the fierce storm hurl through the dripping
leaves.

I hear the house shake to the thunder shocks,
But through it all, I hear no voice that grieves.

O father, there's a voice from far away ;
It calls me, wailing in a plaintive key ;
It makes me shiver while I cling to thee ;
Its sound is softer than the sound of spray,
When no wind stirs along the sleeping sea.

O, daughter, daughter, you are only cold ;
Nestle against my bosom ; do not weep.
The sun to-morrow will arise and peep
Above the hills embossed with green and gold,
And you with laughter wake the world from sleep.

And all night long he held her to his side.
She seemed asleep ; and when the dawn grew red,
He heard a sound that chilled him with its dread ;
A little sound that softly broke and sighed,
And told his aching heart that she was dead.

MADEIRA HILL

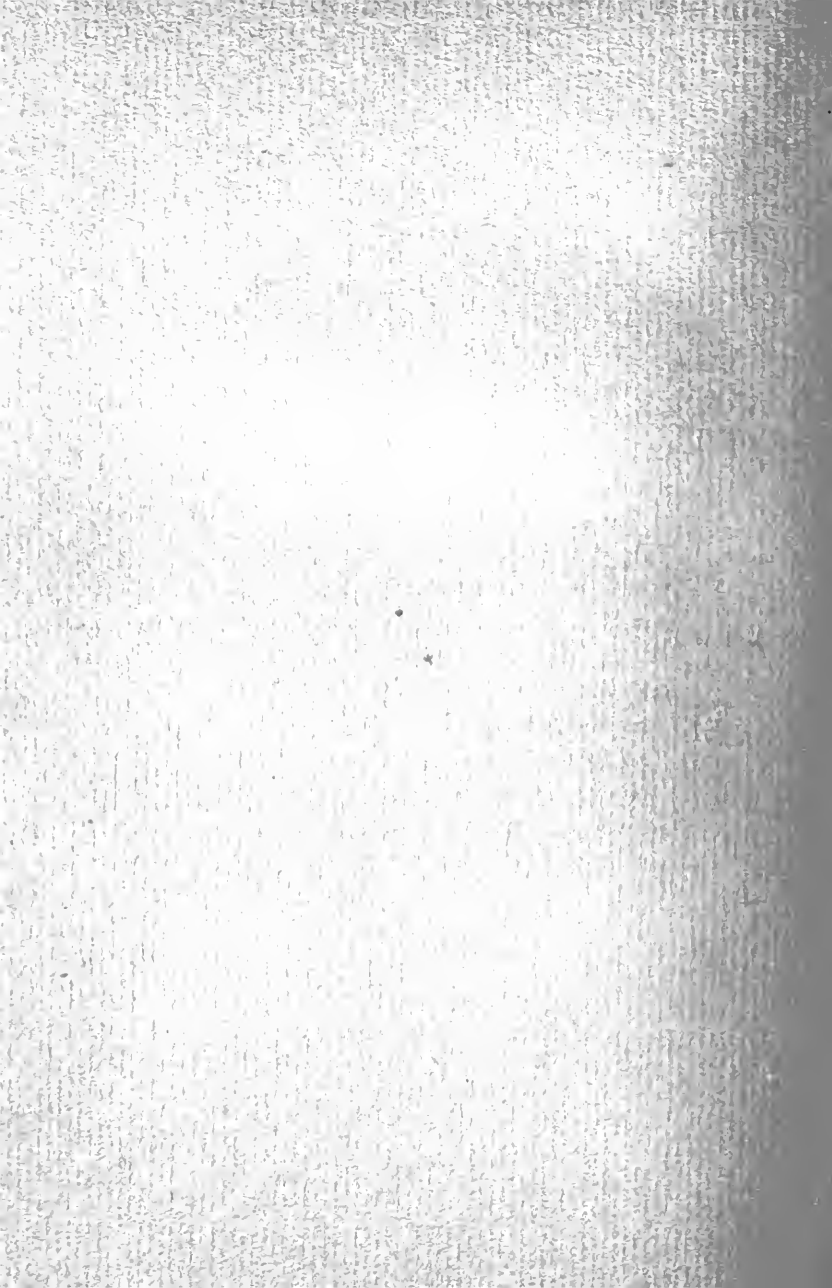
NEAR QUEENSTOWN, S. AFRICA

A THOUSAND years of misery may pile
Their weight upon me, till my shrunken flesh
Is but a speck beneath the monstrous heap,
Struggling with ineffectual attempt
To free itself and gain a moment's ease,
A little ease for all the aching limbs,
And heart oppressed with the incumbent ills,
That stifle every throb, and choke the blood
Along the flagging veins : the light of day,
Long since a benediction to my sight,
Clothing with beauty all the vales and hills
When summer verdure thrills the breathless soul,
Or dry and sapless winter sends her dust
Careering on the wings of icy winds,
May in some fearful storm of clashing worlds
Vanish for ever : trivial thoughts of things,
And dreams that were the pilots of desire
Guiding the soul through such tumultuous seas
As strew their shores with wrecks of mighty men,
Who journeyed chartless o'er their gloomy wastes,
And perished in a seething crash of waves,—
All these, and other memories, thick as bees
Upon the threatened comb, may slip away,
Lapsing like water into thirsty soil,—

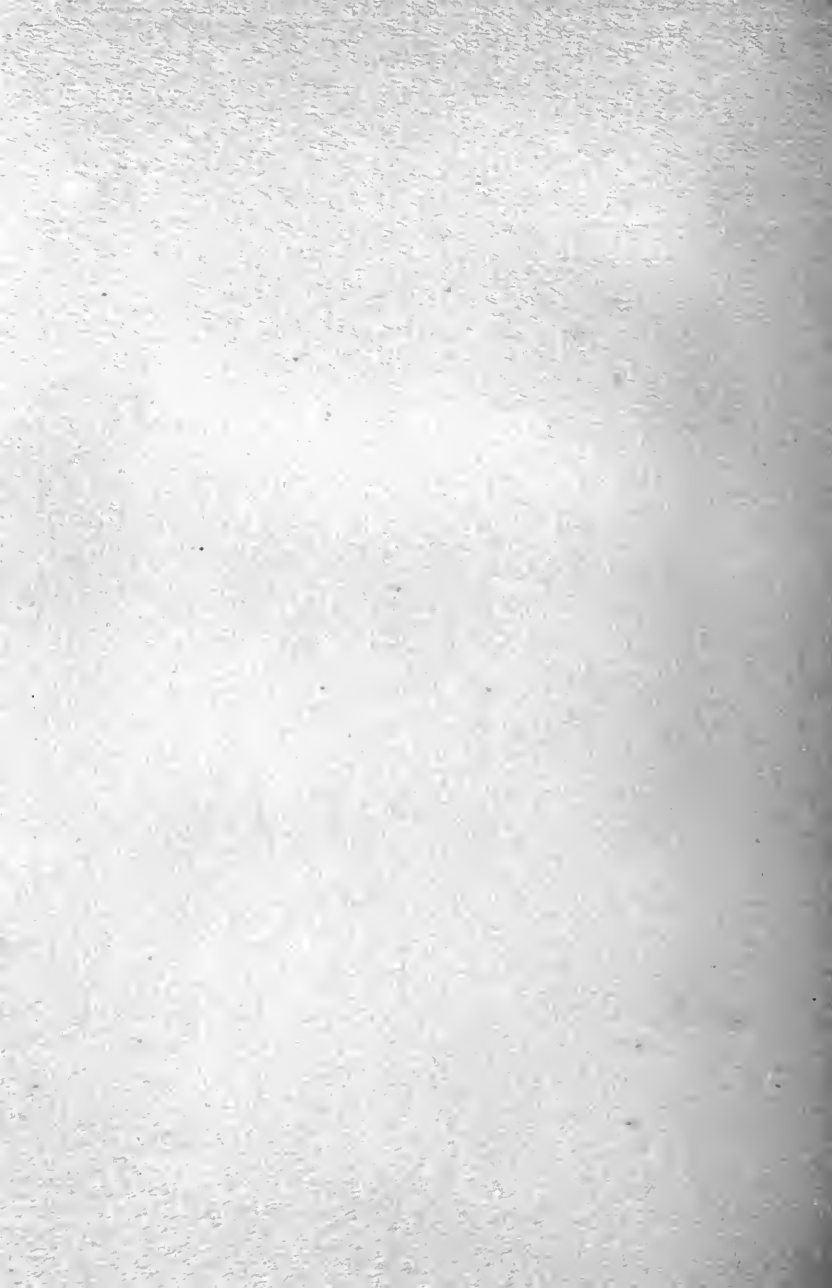
But those green days, O lovely hill, those days
 Spent in the silence of thy wooded kloofs,
 Where God himself might rest and be refreshed
 After huge labour in the fields of space,—
 Those calm, unhurried hours, without noise,
 That held me in their magic charm ; those dreams
 That surged about me like a bursting sea,
 When on thy grassy shoulders, calm and high,
 I waited for the influx from above,
 The strong exultant feeling that assures
 All issues to the breaking heart, and brings
 Peace, patience, and surcease of little frets,—
 Those, and the memory of true friends, whose
 love
 Was nourished in more fruitful stuff than gold,
 Will be to me through all vicissitudes,
 Here, and hereafter when this blood is cold,
 A sustenance more dear than meat and drink,
 A power uplifting all my meaner self,
 And clothing me with glory at the last.

SONG—WINTER

SURLY winter's coming in,
Fly away, Cuckoo—
All the leaves are sere and thin,
Bitten grass begins to droop,
And the swallows sadly troop,
Sitting on the roof and wires
In the sun's declining fires :
Hills that wore their summer green,
Now in sombre brown are seen ;
Winds blow cold about the sky ;
Rivers fail, and vleis are dry,
And the hours through dusty din
Drag their weary wings along :
So fly, cuckoo,
Nor cry, cuckoo :
Go where summer's coming in,
And reveal her with a song.



SONNETS



DANTE TO BEATRICE

AH ! God ! the gulf between us is too dark !
Too deep, and dark, and terrible to cross !
If either now should launch a venturing bark
The surging breakers would assail and toss,
And rend it into pieces ; it would fare
On these fell waters that between us scream,
And fling fierce arms of hatred through the air,
Like some frail atom in a demon's dream ;
Yea ! it would perish and go down to doom
In ravenous swirls of chaos, like a dove
Caught in mid riot of the crash and boom
Of fire, and rain, and thunder ; from above
There where thou livest in pure divine
Smile, and again this whole dark earth will shine.

FOR THE PICTURE " DANTE AND
BEATRICE IN FLORENCE "

Lo ! it is she ! how pure she is and chaste !
With what divine discretion do her feet
Move o'er the flags along the quiet street ;
No thoughts are hers to urge unseemly haste,
Her eyelids droop with bluest veins o'erlaced,
And all her being is as fresh and sweet
As a white lily bending now to greet
The dewy breath of spring ; her robes unbraced
Shed fragrance as she goes with virgin pace
Forth on her way ; and in her gracious mien
I see all virtues gathered ; without pride,
But modestly she lifts her tender face,
Where guileless meditations shine serene,
As if already she were heaven's bride.

FAUST TO MARGUERITE IN PRISON

O! TENDER heart that I have brought to woe!
Whose happy throbs through me have gone to
 pain;

O! piteous soul, in which sometime did reign
Pure, simple thoughts, that had the crystal flow
Of white hill-waters, and the virgin glow
That wakes a summer morning, free from stain,
Immaculate as is some heavenly train
Of angels in procession moving slow—
How have I brought thee O! divinely sweet!
How have I dragged thee to this fevered hell
Wherein thou sittest weeping, sad and dumb,
With wan, cold lips that nevermore shall greet
Me with a smile! God knows I love thee well,
Yet through my love hath all thy sorrow come.

OPHELIA TO HAMLET, SEEING HIM
DISTRAUGHT

AH ! be not cruel, love ! be tender still !
Ah ! see now, you have kissed the roses dead,
And I have lilies for my lips instead ;
My blood runs back as from some nameless ill
To see thee strained to take an eager fill
And harvest of fierce kisses ; face and head
Thy hands and eyes gloat over ; all my skill
To match such passionate degrees hath fled
Like a scared bird in darkness ; loose thy hold
Upon my bruised wrists, nay, do not so
Glare love into my eyes that droop below
Thy violent insistence ! I am cold
When in thy voice I hear the frenzy grow
That of thy will was never yet controlled !

VRONSKY TO ANNA KARENINA

Lo ! I alone have seen her secret soul,
And heard the fevered beating of her heart,
And felt its lonely longing for the whole
Of love ; her pain is mine ; the aging smart
That burns a life to ashes, and o'erweighs
All conscious moments with a load of woe
I too have felt ; Yea ! when her anguish prays
For quick destruction, and she weeps to go
Into the wifeless country, I assist
Her desperate intention with a prayer
Strong as her own ; her wish is mine ; the gist
Of her desire breathes round me in the air ;
Of all men unto me alone she shows
How her wrought soul with love and sorrow glows.

ROCHESTER SOLILOQUISES AFTER JANE'S FLIGHT

SHE loves me ! to all lovers glad and free
 " She loves me " is a clarion call to life,
 That giveth strength to seize the sword of life
 Wherewith to fight and win the highest fee
 In arms, or art, or science ; but to me
 " She loves me " is with poignant sorrow rife ;
 " She loves me " is an ever ruthless knife
 Held in my heart by callous destiny.

And she who loves ! what anguish seals her lips ?
 Through what dead fields do her lone footsteps stray ?
 What unimaginable fears eclipse
 The tender light that comes into her day ?
 What tears are hers that never dim the eyes !
 What burning thoughts ! Ah ! God ! what agonies !

A CRUEL WOMAN

Now she is winter to him, her eyes freeze
When he is near, and all her face is hard ;
Her ruthless look benumbs him like a breeze
After a night of frost, and her regard
Disdains his piteous aspect as he goes
With aimless feet about the dreary town,
That hurts him with its careless open shows
Of laughter ; her indifference will not frown,
But placidly o'erlooks him, till it seems
The welcome he beheld in former smiles
Was feline joy that went before her dreams
Of cruelty to come, her tender wiles
The purring of a tigress, whetting teeth
To crush his heart into a final death.

HIDDEN LOVE

THEIR talk was of the common things ; they spoke
Of how the wind had made the tender flowers
Languish to death, of how the burning hours
Had seared the very heart of spring, and broke
Her mystic spell of passion to invoke
Beauty to life,—of how the season's powers
Had no assistance now from warméd showers,
Of how no more the vernal sense awoke,
But though their speech was of such things as these,
Her secret heart that hardly dared to beat,
Yearned with a love unutterably sweet,
More deep and warm than silent tropic seas,
Wherein are all the brooding mysteries
And hidden wonders of creative heat.

REQUITAL

It is not now a dream, this love of mine.
Long years it lay beneath the arid earth
And no rains fell to soothe the choking dearth
Of the hot ground above it, and no shine
Of fostering sun pierced to the gloomy mine,
Where it was starved of that which gave it birth,
Cramped and suppressed as in a hardened girth
Of burning soil that made its roots combine
Into a knot ; but on a day there came
One with a little water in a vase,
Which gently on the withered plant she threw,
When lo ! it woke, and like a sudden flame
Shot into life, and ranged its lily stars
Around her like a fairy retinue.

FROM THE DUTCH OF H. S.

O ! LOVE ! my love ! thine eyes caress my eyes !
They seem to nestle in my soul ; they meet
My passionate looks with looks as pure and sweet
And tender as unwindy summer skies
Washed in warm showers ; they are the oratories
That draw me into prayer ; they light my feet
Always to thee, and so each day I greet
With answering fervour of tumultuous sighs
The deep love glories of their vestal fires ;
They hold me in the circle of their spells,
Like some enchanted gazer, caught at last
In webs a fairy princess weaves of wires
Invisible ; they are the deep love-wells
Where I may drink, nor ever faint or fast.

INQUISITION

WHY do I love who am not blessed therewith ?
Why spend my life in dreaming of her face ?
Why do I follow what is but a myth,
And proves me to myself as in disgrace
For want of reason rightly to perceive
That she is kind because she cannot love me ?
That she is sweet because she must believe
Her smile is still the med'cine to reprove me ?
Why do I tarry when her wish is plain
That I no more should linger in the way ?
Why do I venture when I should refrain ?
Why drag my shadow through her shining day ?
Nay, ask no more, for love no reason holds,
But like a flower to the light unfolds.

THE ONE HOPE

SINCE all my hope is still to meet her there
In the clear light of inward heaven, that shines
So closely focussed it at once divines
Our secret thoughts if they be clean and fair,
Or full of choking horrors, like the lair
In which some beast on shreds of carrion dines,
Then stretches prone in reek of moulted hair,
And hunts in visions till he heaves and whines ;
Since this is all my hope, and since I would
Be at her feet received as at a shrine,
Let every thought, and every wish of mine,
And each desire that ripples through my blood,
Be henceforth pure, and tender and divine
As those white crowns that feed the mountain
flood.

MAIRIN

My Lady's presence is a holy joy,
Ineffable beyond the soul's desire ;
No foolish goodness makes her weakly coy ;
In her sweet eyes there is no luring fire ;
No staid conceits do in her heart disturb
Its nest of tender thoughts ; she holds the rein
Whose office is to make my spirit curb
Mad leaps into the burning deeps of pain ;
Calmer she is than all the evening sky,
When clouds upgather and the light appears
In windless spaces of ethereal sheen ;
Sweeter than odours when the roses sigh,
And gem the morning with their fragrant tears,
Pure as the flowers where no foot hath been.

SHE WILL NEVER AGAIN VISIT THE OLD
WELL

O ! WEARY watcher waiting at the well !
She whom thou seekest cannot come again ;
She cannot come to fill thy aching brain
With thoughts as sweet as nectar in a cell,
Or bright as flowers in a dreamy dell ;
Her individual force is spent ; in vain
Thou yearnest for the touch that banished pain ;
No longer can she weave her mystic spell
For she is now a part of all around,
A spirit and an essence, a desire,
An aspiration in the heart of things,
That murmurs in the harmony of sound,
Is white in lilies, red in flaming fire,
And everlasting in recurrent springs !

SIESTA

COME to me, sleep, when all the day is loud,
And the hot cares and noises of the light
Fret the raw wounds that irk, then, gentle sprite,
Close round me like a drowsy bosomed cloud
And fold me in from all the pressing crowd
Of harsh solitudes ; obscure my sight
With drooping lids, and soothingly unite
My soul and thine in one dim filmy shroud
Wrought in the vale of Lethê ; trance me deep
In dreams ; sway me in easeful slumber ; close
All avenues against distressful sound,
And with thy downy wings about me, keep
Congenial guard against insidious foes,
Lest the gates part and my retreat be found.

THE LION'S DREAM

Now he recalleth his triumphant days,
And fervid throes of Equatorial fire
Thrill through his heart, till re-aroused desire
(His dream so shows him all his desert ways)
To lap the scented blood of what he slays,
Lifts him upon his feet ; a lurid ire
Burns in his eyes ; a shaggy horror stays
His mane erect in aspect grim and dire.
Through all his limbs, and through his eager frame,
Tense and alive in every cruel nerve,
Surges a fearful tremor, and a groan,
Deep and resounding as when breakers curve
And lash the beach, roars out like rushing flame,
And with his dream his royal mood is gone.

SHAKESPEARE

EVEN as the sea that sips perpetual rain,
And drinks a world of waters in a night,
Returning these along the golden chain
Sped down from heaven on the wings of light,
Till in the soundless fields of crystal space
Huge bastions of unsullied clouds are seen,
Each resting on its silver-burnished base
Above bare hills that wait the vernal sheen ;
Instinct with fire, and such harmonious breath
As murmurs in the music of a shower,
Or thunders when the angry stops of death
Crash open and reveal their tragic power—
So Shakespeare's universal mind was filled,
And thus through him a brighter world distilled.

CECIL RHODES

SEER of visions that our feeble sight
Failed to appraise, or only faintly saw !
Dim shadowy shapes upon an alien shore
They rose for us that had so little light
We could not pierce the mists that seemed to draw
Closer about them while we gazed, and made
Their substance melt like shadows into shade
When twilight slowly deepens into night.

But now the darkness lifts, and we behold
As from a peak on which the sunlight blooms,
Each separate form's incorporate majesty,
Clear as those rocks that dare the highest cold.
Based and secure above the passing glooms,
They stand for eyes that were too blind to see.

MARCUS AURELIUS

DUTY and courage were his stays ; through toil
Incessant, and through hard laborious hours
He strove to check the enervating powers
That flow unseen into the heart, and foil
All sweet desires, and make the soul recoil
Into herself, as when in icy showers
The tender petals of young opening flowers
Shrink from the gusts that ravel them and spoil ;
His gaze was on the highest mountain peaks,
Where first the light shines when the dawn appears ;
Through all vicissitudes he looked above,
And looking so, he overlived the freaks
Of human follies, conquered human fears,
And felt the strength of whom the gods approve.

HOT NORTH WIND

DOWN from the north a wind like rolling thunder
Comes with a haze of dust along the sky,
The trees are bent, their branches torn asunder
Like straining wings that battle as they fly,
Or men stooped forward as in act to run ;
The tongues of flame that lick the panting earth
Scorch with the double fire of wind and sun ;
The grass is withered by the parching dearth,
And heaps of flowers now devoid of scent
Lie scattered in the ruin of the day ;
All nature fails ; the very streams are spent
To sate the thirsting wind, whose burning sway
Wrecks the thick breathing earth that lately was
Robed in a waving garment of young grass.

MORNING

SLOW mists were on the ridges all around,
And in the kloofs, and on the mountain side
They moved and swayed, a softly flowing tide
That foamed against the rocks without a sound,
Then circled back upon the lower ground
In folding mazes that would not abide
Or linger there, but floated far and wide
In sinuous waves no shores were set to bound.

Our raptured souls were in that magic sea,
And in those wreaths that journeyed with the wind
Were all our thoughts, and in each joyous mind
The beauty of that morning mystery
Became an exultation, yet to be
Remembered when our mortal eyes are blind.

SPRING

GREEN grass, green trees, and greenest wildernesses
Of cool green ferns, and, ah ! such long green spaces
Sleeping within the sunlight's warm embraces !
Green-shadowed rills that gurgle through green
 creases,

And deep green nooks wherein the locust dresses
Her shining wings ; green dells and high green
 places

O'er which bright swarms of sportive insect graces
Flash and are gone, and know not what distress is ;
Green-covered spots, green fields where greenness-
 less is

By reason of the clouds of blowing daisies
That variegate the verdure with their faces ;
Green arbours where all greenest loveliness is
Like little billowy puffs of maiden tresses
That toss the light in golden mists and hazes.

THE FIRST DAWN

WHAT blackness reigned before a star was born,
When far across void spaces of the night
The pale diaphanous wonder of the dawn
Rose ghestlike on the unaccustomed sight
Of all the unimaginable eyes
(Strange creatures of the darkness sure were bred)
That stared towards the east in wild surmise,
To see the changing colours throb and spread,
Innumerable films of rosy fire,
Flushing the orient with their glowing tints,
Clothing the haggard plains in rich attire,
And flashing from great hills of naked flints,
Until the gaunt and hungry earth displayed
The jewelled splendour of a queen arrayed.

THE MOUNTAIN TOP

WHAT witching hours of wild delight are here !
What amplitude of healing airs that sweep
Downward to wake the dreamers from their sleep
Far in unhealthful valleys ! and what cheer
Of gleeful laughter wins the soul from fear
To gambol on these lusty heights like sheep
Glad with the spring ! in what still pools and deep
Shine spaces of the crystal atmosphere !
What flowers are here ! what scented dells of shade !
What carols make the morning musical !
What fragrant coils of everlastings glow
In secret nooks along each sinuous glade !
What luminous waters swell and pause to fall,
And rush to save the parching fields below.

DROUGHT

Lo! all the land is dry and parched with heat,
And all the hills are white with withered grass
That hath no glint of greenness, and, alas!
See how the lately waving fields of wheat
Droop wearily towards a sure defeat
Beneath the breath of scorching winds that pass
Over the arid earth; how like a glass
The hot flats shimmer in the ruthless beat,
More strenuous as the burning weeks increase,
Of quenchless and immitigable rays
That make a terror of the rainless days,
And the fierce vault of fire that will not cease
To heap with death the long and dusty ways,
And fill the earth with hunger's gaunt disease.

AT A FLOWER SHOW

ROSES I saw, and poppies all alight
With colours of the dawn, and rainbow hues
Drawn from the sun and all the fostering dew
Distilled upon them by the brooding night,
And delicate sweet-peas, so purely dight
They must have bloomed where dusty winds refuse
To blow, or haply where nuns dream and muse
In silent meditation, out of sight
Of the rough world and all its shows of death—
White clouds of lilies, and soft pansies blew
All round me in the sweet of their own breath,
And by the gate a flowering wonder grew,
Draped to the ground as in a snowy wreath—
So summer looks with winter peeping through.

" WRIT IN WATER "

THE teasing wind veers in capricious leaps,
And ere it settles on a steady wake,
Flutters in sudden gusts upon the lake,
Ruffling you there the water into heaps
Of dusky leaves and branches; then it sweeps
Into a racing cloud or formless snake,
Or shivering hills that soon spread out and break
With soundless crash,—showing you little peeps
Of tree, and flower, and hill and grassy glade,—
Then all the shuddering surface smoothly clears,
And the blown visions troop away and fade.
So do the consummations of the years
Flicker and fail upon the boundless sea
That holds the secrets of eternity.

MUSIC

WHAT visions from the wonder land of dreams
Float o'er me on the magic wings of sound !
What mountains with the gold of morning crowned
Rise into radiant skies ! what filmy gleams
Dance on the waters of bright silver streams
That flow for ever through enchanted ground !
What thundering torrents leap with sudden bound,
Scattering a mist of rainbow tinted beams
Into the light ! and what sweet scents are here
From flowers no mortal eye hath ever seen,
Drenching the wind with fragrance that hath been
Till now the desert's breath ! what gusts of fear
Wail in the fretting strings ! what heavy teen
Moans low along the gloomy atmosphere !

AB IMO PECTORE

I

LORD of pure hopes and holy influence !
Fill all my heart with soft assuaging thoughts,
Let me be touched with that divinest sense
Which is not hasty in unmannered torts,
But goes in wistful silence, like a nun
Wrapped in her veil of mercies through the earth
To tender ministrations ; let me shun
The cold thin laughter of the cynic's mirth,
The miser's lust, the cheat's degrading plots,
The pride of place and social circumstance,
And all th' intemperate fevers that are blots
Upon the soul's white radiance of romance ;
Destroy all spites, O Lord ! all secret evils
That hold me down to sympathy for devils.

AB IMO PECTORE

II

BE pitiful, O God ! through all the years !
And when I cannot see Thy glories shine
On field or sky, nor any light divine
In my own heart because of bitter tears
That blind me, and when darkness reigns, and fears
Annul my joys, and my sad spirits pine
Like flowers drenched in rain of burning brine,
Or tender buds a freezing season sears,
O Lord ! of mercies then, and peaceful days,
And immemorial quiet, let me feel
(Even me, alas ! who cannot rightly plead)
The full inflowing fervour of Thy grace,
Which in my heart perchance may come to heal
The piteous wounds that now for ever bleed.

AB IMO PECTORE

III

AH ! God ! I said, is this my way to go ?
This rayless pit where murky mists uproll,
Cold as a wind that wanders round the pole,
Must I endure its unimagined woe,
And strain to quell its terrors, till I grow
Blind as a runner ere he touch the goal,
And as he loses, shall I lose control
Of heart and limb, and perish even so ?

No voice makes answer, and no beams dispel
The pall of doubt that on my spirit lies ;
No songs of joy enchant ; no silver bell
Rings out glad peals through these disastrous skies ;
But on this path that circles down to hell
Only wild echoes of despair arise.

AB IMO PECTORE

IV

THIS is the time—no other—now at last,
Free from the sins that held my soul in bonds,
As slimy things are held in slimy ponds,
And may not 'scape, now ere the conquered past
(That like a demon with wild eyes aghast,
Stares from behind huge poison-spotted fronds)
Infects me with the spirit that responds
To the old habits I have lately cast
Wholly behind me, now let me be quick
To run upon the path that leads ahead,
Not daunted, nor confused by any trick
Of circumstances ; but seeing still the red
Far dawn that soon will be a blaze of light
If only I refuse to think of night.

FATE

OUR fate is round us like a viewless net,
Woven of thoughts, inheritances, deeds,
And all the drift of circumstantial weeds
About the shores of being that are set,
Imponderable strands no mortal fret
Hath power to fray ; the inevitable seeds
Sown by the gods along the cosmic meads
(The gods who sow and never know regret)
Throw round us their imperishable bents ;
Webs knitted in the house of destiny
Enmesh the yearning visage of the soul,
And though it cry, the sequence of events,
The march and order of the mighty whole
Follow unchanged through all eternity.

QUIET DEATH

To die and be no more, to pass away
Like downy mist from off the mountain side,
That with the flowing of the roseate tide
Goes like a breath into the burning day,
Invisible along its azure way,
Leading to spaces wherein planets hide ;
To cease so smoothly and be quit of pride,
And done with all the foibles of this clay,
Quit of the drags, the little cold conceits,
The fevered weeks of brooding villainies,
The despicable plots that cloud the mind,
And hopes that ever prove phantasmal cheats—
So to be rid of these, and more than these,
Were to be blessed above the common kind.

THE REAPER

IF one should with his final breath repent
And prostrate all his soul for evil ways
In hope of mercy, if his clouding gaze,
Now catching light that hitherto was spent
In vain for him, sees every wrong event
In his whole span of years, as in a blaze
Of sudden fire one sees with the stark amaze
Wide tracts of dusty ruin, where a rent
Yawns through the earth, will he go down to sleep
With no more debt to pay because of sin ?
It may not be ! his very hands must reap,
Until the hideous crop be gathered in,
All he hath sown ; and though he cry and weep
He hath no rest till all be clean within.

COMMONPLACES

THERE is a sigh in every breeze that blows ;
The brightest song hath store of sorrow in it ;
Death glideth in the weakest stream that flows,
And joy flies all who reach and strain to win it ;
In every spring a fading autumn broods,
And summer smiles with winter at her heart ;
The merriest crowd doth hint of solitudes,
And light in darkness hath a counterpart ;
The gayest laughter hath a touch of doom,
The lightest speech an undertone of pain ;
The youngest heart will soon be in the tomb,
And cold annihilation will retain
In frozen grasp no eloquence can move
All living things and what they hate or love.

ARE WE BUT SMOKE ?

ARE we no more than little rings of smoke
Blown from the lips into the ambient air,
That slowly fade, or by a sudden stroke
Are shattered out of form ? Do we compare
With things so frail their *only* life is that
Which a breath gives them ? In the final sum
Are we but dregs that foul the wineless vat,
Sour leaves and litter ? or such frothy scum
As the spent waves deliver to the beach ?
Do such deep conscious beings suffer death
Irrevocably at the last ? Will each
Pass like a smoke when he resigns his breath,
Or once again through un conjectured fields
Follow a dream whose capture nothing yields ?

DEJECTION

WE move dejected through a world of gloom ;
While the sun shines we tread the dusty way,
And all night long the sorrows of the day
React themselves in visions that assume
Wild, ghastly shapes, until the sleepless room
Is like a cell where maniacs curse and pray,
Tainting the air with flakes of fatal spume
Breathed from sick lungs already in decay ;
Our restless hearts beat fiercely up a scale
Of misery, and on the highest note
Will sometimes break and in a moment end ;
But the sad lips will mostly smile and pale,
And the voice frolic in the aching throat,
For so we smother what we cannot mend.

THE QUEST

I

BLINDLY we seek through all the vernal years,
And mostly fail because we cannot see
The real behind the seeming entity ;
Blindly we seek, protected by no fears
Of sorrow and inevitable tears,
Should our mischoice disturb the harmony
That sings in love, as in the sunlit sea
The organ music of the shining spheres
Sings of divine attractions, that beget
Beauty for ever ; yea, we find and take,
And straightway all the agonies awake
To haunt our spirits with their ceaseless fret ;
Two lives that missed the bourne of love, must
quake
For ever in the deserts of regret.

THE QUEST

II

AND when we wake our souls have touched despair,
And reached the oozy bottom of the deep
Where dead hopes lie, as in a broken heap
The dreams of youth, that down the golden stair
Tumbled to ruin wholly past repair
Are gathered ; lo ! our eyes no longer weep
Such numbing cold is round our hearts to keep
The fountains hard however warm the air ;
And now we brace our limbs to swim away
Each from the other on the sundering waves,
But cannot, since we are old custom's slaves,
And marriage bonds we dare not thus essay
To break ; we hold together till death saves,
And only smile into the closing day.

THE QUEST

III

THE woman pales, and the man glooms his brows,
And both are sad for something gone awry ;
Deep in their hearts, unseen by any eye
The mischief seethes ; and both regret their vows
On lonely pillows, when the silent house
Stands blindly dumb beneath the starry sky ;
The sobbing of their sorrow even crows
The callous fates, and though no uttered cry—
Soul anguish bleeds in silence unto death—
Calls out of dreams across the senseless dark
For pity and surcease of aching dole,
Pain goes into the air with every breath
Exhaled in sleep, and wild heart pulses mark
The poignant griefs that wring each wasted soul.

THE QUEST

IV

PERCHANCE no one or both along the way
Will shine the face that should have crowned the
quest

While yet the dawn was like a rosy crest
Upon the hills. Then will the soul obey
New-roused emotions by a vision blessed
With sudden light? Then will the barren breast,
So long the home of stale indifference, play
Its part of love against the bitter sway
Of memories that hurt? Will the found face
Smile life into the dull evasive eyes
And help the soul to doff her memories
That wore so long the mantle of disgrace?
Or will "too late" be like a wall to rise
Full in the path which neither may displace?

FUTILITY

WHEREFORE this arduous and unyielding strife
To garner love and cling to happiness
Against the use of nature? In what life
Moves a glad pulse unwitting of distress?
Is honesty a bar to crime's offence?
Doth truth prevail like treacherous deceits?
Can the soul curb the ever eager sense
That lures the body to unholy feats?
Will innocence disarm conspiracy?
Or weakness move compassion in the strong,
When the last breath escapes, and the last sigh
Fails on the lips? All seems compact of wrong;
Yet our brave souls endure, nor cease to hope
Though slipping down the inevitable slope.

AS WE HAVE LIVED WE DIE

YEA, is it so? will death relieve the soul
Of its most secret and inveterate sin?
Will all be altered when behind the goal
Set to the flesh the spirit shall pass in?
It cannot be, as we have lived we die;
Prone in the dust of our unrighteous deeds
At the last moment we shall surely lie,
And so pass forth; nothing there is but breeds
The thing it is; evil shall still be so
Though spirit-borne into ethereal ways,
Yet there perchance a stronger will may grow
To do some work which God may crown with praise
As being good; a new environment
Remoulds till we lose the old intent.

FERVENTES INSANIA

A LUSTFUL passion is the death of love,
For when assuaged there is no reason left
Why any more the sullen pulse should move,
Or the lips hunger for a rosy theft.
Even as an adder that delights to sting,
Injecting death into his victim's blood,
So desperate lust will in a moment's fling
Poison the sweetest spirit's source of good,
Until all thoughts, all wishes, all desires,
All dreams that fall between the dusk and light
And take the soul with longing, all are fires
That feed the temper of this appetite,
Caught in the circle of whose ruining spell,
Men are destroyed ere they consider well.

THE NERVES OF GOD

WE are the nerves of God ; through us He feels,
And through all pulsing ions scattered far
In dust of worlds or light of throbbing star,
Through all this restless universe reveals
Or hides securely under frozen seals
Of silence, and through viewless things that mar
The bloom of beauty, waging ceaseless war
Until the higher issue faints and reels
Beneath the stress of being ; that which draws
Life from the centre, with returning flow
Invades again the source from whence it came,
And through the secret essence of its cause
Sends speeding tremors ; the peripheral glow
Shivers to God along a wave of flame.

THE RHEBOK

ON the cool mountain side, whose scattered stones
Are coloured like himself, he guards his ewes
With vigilant care, and when the quivering dew
Take the first light, and rosy curtained thrones
Tower in the east above the barren cones,
That far beneath him flaunt their fiery hues,
He rises, and in soft persuasive tones
Wakes his small charge, or in the air pursues
With anxious gaze the eagle sweeping round,
Or gets a glut of tainted wind, and blows
His thin, clear whistle on a piercing note
To warn the herd, that with a sudden bound
Leaps to the call, and like a whirlwind goes
Over the ridge above the Shepherd's cote.

THE BUFFALO

ENCASED in mud, and breathing valley steam,
And teased all day by clouds of stinging flies,
That smother round his flanks and mouth and eyes,
Provoking rage, till an unlidded gleam
Darts from each eye across the sombre stream,
And his great bulk is shaken, to surprise
And scare away the pestering hosts, that rise
Black in the air about him ; parrots scream
Above him in the tangled overgrowth,
And monkeys chatter, and the green snake glides
From branch to branch with supple weaving thews,
But he, though irked by noise and stir, is loth
To leave the wallowing-pool that coats his sides,
And back and belly with protective ooze.

EEN VOORTREKKERS BRIEF

Nu wil ik in het kort verhaal
Hoe dat wij woon hier aan de Vaal.

Gij weet toen wij van Graaffrenet
Met wagens en ons vee verzit,
Toen was daar in de lucht geen volk ;
Zoo droog was dit, geen ding wou groei,
En wij zijn bijna uitgeroei.
Ook was de wetten daar zoo straf,
Geen hond kon vrijelijk vecht of blaf ;
Zoo nauwelijks was wij daar omring,
Wij durf niet dans, nog minder zing,
En, ach, als wij een doppie steek
Dan blus de heele wereld bleek ;
En de vervloekste wet was daar,
Een eeuwighduurende gevaar.
Hier is dit anders—als is stil,
Een man kan handel volgens wil.
De veldkornet is Piet z'n oom ;
Hij is te vriendelijk om te schroom ;
En als een kaffer niet wil hoor,
Of kom hij met zijn leugens voor,
Of word parmantig als wij knoor,
Dan val wij op zijn baatje neer,
En strijk hom tot hij goed bekeer.

Dit voorrecht, en ook anders meer
 Laat ons een vrije leve voer,
 Zeer aangenaam voor eenig boer.

Hier woon wij in een vraaije wereld,
 Met bloemen en met dauw bepareld ;
 De zoete geur van bloeiend veld
 Is hier voor ons genot gesteld.
 Hier stort de regen daagelijks neer,
 En droogte vrees wij nimmer meer.
 De gras groei hooger dan een paard,
 De beeste eet hul dik als Tjaart—
 Gij kan hom goed, hij's nu zoo vet
 Wij moet hom elke stoel belet ;
 En voor hom is geen bed te pas,
 Zoo slaap hij nes een os, op gras.
 Zoo als een zeekoe snork hij snachs,
 En schrik ons dikwils onverwachs.
 Hij dwing nu ernstig om te trouw,
 Mar dit zal zwaar gan met zijn vrouw,
 Want, geloof mij, nevens zoo een knaap
 Is dit niet makelijk om te slaap.

Klein Sannie het de kenkhoes zeer,
 Wij moet haar borst met bok vet smeer,
 En zij word beter, dank de Heer.

Jannie is door zijn paard geskop.
 De dier was vuurig in zijn kop,

Of dit door ziekte was, of wat
 Is duister, mar de paard was glat
 Van zijn gewoone houding kweit
 Toen Jannie aan zijn haakscheen bijt,
 (Dit moes hij doen, want Kolboy wou
 Volstrek niet roer, en Piet z'n vrouw
 Seg, " bijt hom aan zijn haakscheen, Jan,
 Dit is de aller beste plan ")
 Met eens maak hij een groot lawaai,
 Hij skop, en bijt ook, nes een haai,

En eer dat Jannie hom kon los,
 Krijg hij de klap net op zijn kos.
 Ik vrees de kind zou daadelijk sterf,
 Hij word zoo bleek als kuiken nerf,
 Mar gelukig had wij in de huis
 Een vaatje brandewijn, en Tijs
 Schenk hom een stijve dop daarvan ;
 Toen hij dit drink kon hij weer staan ;
 Mar nu's zijn maag zoo zwak en teer,
 Hij klaag geduurig, min of meer.

Stuur ons met Andries weder op
 Een hoeveelheid rhenostertop.
 Dit is de beste medesijne
 Voor zwakke maag, en derem pijn.
 Bij ons groei zulke bosjes niet.
 Des puure gras in ons gebied.

Ou tanta Vogel lijden zwaar
 Aan kanker, en is in gevaar.
 Wij het nu al ons kunst gebruik,
 Mar, ach, de pijn blijf in haar buik.
 Wij maak van kanker bosjes thee,
 En geef haar ander middels mee,
 Mar te vergeefs ; de kanker groei
 Al grooter, en haar neus de bloei.
 Zij is nu ergelijk dun en bloot,
 En peins geduurig om den dood.

Verder, is almal hier gezond,
 Behalve de zwaart stompstaart hond.
 Hij was door een vergiftig slang
 Gebijt, ik denk, op't lenker vang.
 Een kaffer dokter was ter hand,
 En met zijn onbeschoft verstand
 Breng hij de hond 't gevaar voorbij ;
 Dit was te wonderlijk voor mij
 Om van de zaak te zit en denk,
 Dat Got zou aan een kaffer schenk
 De wijsheid om een slang z'n gif
 Geheel van 't lichaam uit te sif.
 Ja, wel, de schepsel het misschien
 Ook van de Heere wat verdien ;
 Hoewel hij zonder ziel geschap is,
 En kom niet meer toe dan de aapies,

Aan 't Almacht is dit altoos vrij
 Te handel zo's Hij wil ; daarbij
 Moet wij nog een gedachte maak,
 Elk vruchte het zijn eige smaak,
 En of een lichaam wit of zwart is
 Hij is geen man wie zinder baard is.

De grootste schade hier bestaan
 Door de vervlukste lagavaan.
 De dier kom dikwils van zijn gat
 Om hier een hoender weg te vat.
 Piet doet zijn uiterst 'hom te schiet,
 Mar al zijn moeite is verniet,
 De lagavaan glip hom voorbij,
 En spring in't water, los en vrij.

De wereld nu is luister groen,
 En wild is hier bij de millioen.
 De vlakke dril als hulle roer,
 Een vraai gezicht voor eenig boer.
 Wanneer ik lus het, zit ik neer
 Niet verder dan de voorhuis deur,
 Zoek gauw de vetste eland uit,
 Haak los—zijn vel klopt nes biscuit—
 Hij leg en beeve op zijn rug,
 Zijn klauwtjes rillen in de lucht ;
 De andere denk niet om te vlucht,
 Schrik net zoo effen, en begin
 Weder te wei met ernstig zin.

Nu wil ik in het kort vertel
 Hoe kom ik aan een—ding z'n vel.
 't was helder maanlicht, en wij wacht
 Voor ongedierte op dit nacht.
 Omtrent een duizend tree van't huis,
 Waar een dof paatje 't ander kruis,
 Hier zit wij, elk met zijn geweer,
 Ons staarten op een miershoop neer.
 Rondom was bosche, mar de maan
 Schijnt helder uit de lucht ons aan.
 Dit was zoo stil, geloof mij, zwaar,
 Geen windje roer de kleinste blaar ;
 Zoo stil gij kon de gras hoor bloei,
 En ook uw eige haare groei.
 Hier zit wij spraakeloos voor een tijd.
 Ik het begin mij zeer te spijs
 Dat ik zoo dom was om te wacht
 Op zoo een schoone maanlicht nacht.
 Mij beene was bij destijds stijf ;
 De jicht was in mij heele lijf,
 En net zoo's ik mij kop wou draai
 Was daar in't bosch een groot lavaai.
 Wi j hoor een ezel skop en schreuw,
 " Mij Got," zeg Piet, " daar is de leeuw "
 Ik greep met eens mij ou geweer,
 En spring zoo hastig van de grond,
 De wereld draai voor't eerste rond.
 Ik kruip voorzigtig door de bosch,

(Gij weet een leeuw is niet een vos,
 En van hem leer ik alte wel,
 Hij breek zijn nek wie spring te snel)
 De honde blaf hul bijna dood,
 En ik en Piet was in de noot ;
 Mij hart klopt koud, mij ribbes tril,
 En daar bij voel ik zeer onwel ;
 Mar nogtans kruip wij door de bosch,
 En amper schiet ik daar een os.
 Wij ziet geen leeuw ; de honde raasch
 Geduurig bij een witpens vaars.
 Ik loer voorzigtig door de woud.
 Piet zeg, " ik denk zijn staart is koud."
 Toen wij nu denk des alles oor,
 Kom weder van de bosch een knoor.
 Piet stel hom klaar, en ik ruk om ;
 Dit voel of iets van achter kom.
 " Daar kom hij," hoor ik nu van Piet.
 " Schiet Oom, de dier is op ons, schiet."
 Ik ruk de " sanna " schielijk op—
 (Gij weet zij kan zoo vreeslijk skop)
 En eer ik iets kon bellijk zien
 Haak ik de schoot los—nu mischien
 Denk gij ik het een leeuw geschiet,
 Mar (zwaar, ik schrijf dit met verdriet)
 Wat ik geschiet het geef een brul,
 Mij Got," zeg Piet, " des oom z'n bul,"
 Ik schiet hom dood eer ik dit wis,

Zoo ga dit is gij haastig is.
Van dit gebeurtenis is't te leere,
Te dapper kost jou ook mar veere.
Zoo kom ik aan een-ding z'n vel.
Dit brief is lang genoeg, varwel.

KOFFIES LIED

Ik geef niet om voor uintjes,
Nog minder voor rosijntjes,
Geef mij mar net een schenksel uit de ou beminde
pot,

Of daar melk is maak geen zaak,
Wat te wit is het geen smaak,
En de zwartste koffie drink ik met een eeuwig frisch
genot.

Is daar zuiker, is daar ni,
Dit is "all de zame to me,"
Hoe bitterder hoe beter, zoo bring aan de pot en
schenk.

Was Katrin de hoogste "lady,"
Drink zij nog geen "lemonade" ni,
Zoo een flauwe drank's te misselijk voor een mensch
wat koffie drink.

Of dit van gerst gebrouw is,
Zoo lang als dit ni flauw is
Smaak koffie voor mij beter dan de beste boland's
wijn.

Eer de eerste hoender roep
Zit ik wachtend op de stoep ;
Voor een rookend koppie koffie ach, gij weet ni hoe
ik kwijn.

Zoo's de dag begin te breek,
En de sterre te verbleek,
Voel ik vreeslijk hol na benne, en ik weet des koffie
tijd,

“ Sta op ou vrouw, des laat al,
Kom af nu van de katel,
En maak de koffie daadelijk want de licht schijn
door de ruit.”

Als gij op kommando rij,
Ga gij jacht, of ga gij vrij,
De beste drank ter wereld kom mar uit een boer kom-
buis ;
Zoo hier is voor de koppie,
G'lijk vol van geurig koffie,
Een drank wat net gezond is op de veld of in de huis.

EEN DROOM

EEN nacht het ik een vreemde droom.
 Ik zie voor't huis een ruischend stroom,
 Met schuimend water, wit als room,
 Die kook en zwel ;
 Op't wal was een wie neder buk,
 En slinger onder de verdruk
 Van wereld's droef en ongeluk,
 Of die van hel.

Haar lokken zweven in de wind,
 En op haar borst draag zij een kind ;
 Diep, kon ik zien, was hij bemind ;
 Zij ziet alleen
 De bleek gelaatje (want de maan
 Was helder), en daar kom een traan
 En raakt zijn doodelijk lippies aan,
 Te koud te ween.

Zij kruip al nader aan de vloed,
 Geest wit was zij, alsof haar bloed
 Verzuigd was ; op de water spoed
 Een lijk voorbij ;
 Toen dit gebuur verdwijn mij droom ;
 Zij was de vrouw van Piet'zn oom,
 En destijds sterf hij, nes een boom
 Snel afgesnij.

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